BING

Summer 2010

No. 155

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

Founded in 1936, the world's longest-running fan club - as recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records

OUR MISSION: To perpetuate the memory and the musical legacy of Bing Crosby for the benefit of future generations

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Bing Crosby Enterprises: www.BingCrosby.com
BING magazine: www.bingmagazine.co.uk
Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Bing-Crosby/44544738326

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All remittances should be sent to Michael Crampton in **£ sterling** payable to *The International Club Crosby* with the exception of::
(a) American and Canadian members who should send their remittances in U.S. dollars to F. B. Wiggins
(b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor or the American Co-Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

BING is the official journal of *The International Club Crosby* and is published in the spring, summer and winter of each year. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICC. All original material © Copyright ICC 2010.

EDITORIAL

On April 6th, Ron Bosley, the ICC photo editor and a stalwart member of our team, passed away after a brief illness. We all mourn his untimely passing and lament the huge void it leaves within our organization. Ron and I traded photos and e-mails for many years, as well as sharing a mutual love of vintage Harley-Davidson motorcycles. He was one of the nicest, most generous people I've known, and I shall miss him. Malcolm was very close to Ron and he has written a separate obituary which you will find on a subsequent page in this issue, but for now, I wish to extend my own personal condolences to his family and many friends.

We are all grateful for the many new and exciting releases on the Bing Crosby Archive label, most notably Bing's final studio album, *Seasons*, making its debut on CD. This was in the planning stages for well over a dozen years, and we are thrilled it has finally been made available, sounding better than ever. *Seasons* has long been my personal favorite Bing Crosby album, and as a result, I bought a number of extra copies. One of which I sent to entertainer Roy Clark, whose 1969 top ten recording of "Yesterday When I Was Young", (which Bing recorded for the album), went on to become his signature song. Roy sent me an e-mail, recalling Bing fondly:

> "Greg, Thank you ever so much for the surprise! Oh how I enjoyed that time. What an honor to spend time with Bing. I just want to tell you how much I appreciate your effort and truly something I will enjoy from now on!
>
> Sincerely, Roy Clark".

Roy was referring to the time spent with Bing as part of the 1969 Crosby Christmas television special, on which he was a guest star.

Ken Crossland reviews the new issues in *Keeping Track* and we look forward to more releases from the Bing Crosby Archives soon, hopefully in time for the winter issue of BING.

Greg Van Beek

This is one of the most exciting times for Crosby fans for many years. First the Mosaic set, then the Collectors' Choice issues, the TV show and the DVD containing four of Bing's TV shows plus some extras too! Wonderful! This is very much like the halcyon days of Crosbyana and it is a long time since *Keeping Track* had so much listed. And we are told that there is more to come later in the year, perhaps with a Christmas theme.

There was similar excitement when Bing started out on the comeback trail in 1974 and we have unearthed several articles for your pleasure describing what was happening then.

Apart from in-depth reviews of the new releases, Richard Baker takes a long look at the Longines set issued in the 1960s, Greg Van Beek has discovered a hitherto unknown Bing film appearance and Carolyn Schneider outlines her busy schedule in Nevada.

Ever reliable Keith Parkinson continues his *Celluloid Crosby* series with a look at one of Bing's busiest days in the film studios and his A-Z of Bing's Movies keeps on rolling along like the well-known river. There is a lot for me to report in *Bing on the Box,* Gord Atkinson tells us about a meeting with Donald O'Connor and we say goodbye to Lena Horne in our obituaries section. We report on developments in legal cases concerning the Crosby estate and there is disappointing news about Bing Crosby's Restaurant in Rancho Mirage.

Members should have an insert with this issue for them to order the next one in the acclaimed 'Through The Years' series of CDs being issued by Sepia. We hope to continue with the project until the end of Bing's Decca recording contract.

Our covers this time have been kindly provided by Greg Van Beek and the back cover is from the Crosby family's appearance in the *Goldilocks* story in 1969.

Michael Crampton reminds us that the Leeds meeting this year is on October 3. The numbers attending have been dropping - will this be the last one after 45 years? I shall be doing my best to prepare a bonanza for those who come along, so make an effort to be there if you can.

Malcolm Macfarlane

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SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

Members may recall that in the last issue of BING, I reported that 150 members had not paid their subscriptions at the time of writing. Thankfully, the majority did respond positively to Wig's reminder and mine but we still lost 46 valued members and we do not always know why they chose not to stay with us, some after long years of valued membership. Perhaps we are not delivering what our members want and if so please tell us. We need to know!

Added to the above loss is the sad news reported below of the death of 17 members, many who were well known to the wider Crosby fraternity. **Ron Bosley** had a special place in Crosbyana history and his friendly style, knowledge of Bing's career and his photographic genius brought much pleasure to his Crosby friends over more than 50 years. Ron's passing leaves a wide gap but I am certain that he would have wanted us to use his photographic legacy wisely and that we should continue to value and use his collection of photographs for promoting Bing's legacy for as long as we are able.

The new Collectors Choice CDs are now appearing in the HMV stores in the UK varying in price from £15 to £18, allowing members without Internet access an opportunity to add these long awaited additions to their collections. We wish Collectors Choice and Bing Crosby Enterprises every success with this unparalleled venture.

By the way, see *Trading Post* for information about the rare book "Alternate Bing Crosby" by Colin Pugh which was published in 1988. We've got a new supply!

Leeds 2010 will be our 45th annual dinner/meeting and I hope to see many of you there where you can share your mutual interest with other dedicated Bing Crosby admirers. As is becoming customary, we will arrange a dinner at Weetwood Hall for those staying in the area on the Saturday night.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members of ICC with a wish that their involvement with the club will bring them interest and enjoyment as they interact with their fellow Bing enthusiasts.

CANADA

Sydney Enzel (Downsview, Ontario).

UNITED STATES

Carmela Amari (Staten Island, New York), Robert Bader (Marina del Rey, California), Trent Clifton (White City, Oregon), Cynthia Crosby (Los Angeles, California), Mike Reilly (St. Louis, Missouri), Richard Stone (Kew Gardens, New York) and Barbara Warren, (New York, New York).

UNITED KINGDOM

Kevin Campbell (Lanark, Lanarkshire), Sylvia Gibbon (Slough, Buckinghamshire), Alan McKay (Southsea, Hampshire) and Stephen Newman (Upminster, Essex).

REPUBIC OF IRELAND

Ted Hurley (Howth, Co. Dublin).

DONATIONS

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support provided by the following members: –

Arthur Blood, Paddy Gilley, Bill Green, Bob Halls, Bert Hamblett, Maurice Heywood, Jim Roche, John Stiles, Trevor Wagstaff and Bill Wesley.

All donations are welcome and gratefully acknowledged and we continue to owe much to the generosity of our benefactors.

DEATHS

With sadness we regret to advise the passing of the following members: –

Ian Arnott (Inverness), Ron Bosley (Clitheroe, Lancashire), Don Brewster (Loughborough,

Leicestershire), Roy Edwards (Pensby, Wirral), Mr G W Hill (Coulby Newham, Tyne & Wear), Mr M Jackson (Peterborough, Cambridgeshire), Bruce Logan (San Antonio, Texas), James Nuttall (Knutsford, Cheshire), Wally Oldfield (Rayleigh, Essex), Aldo Silengo (North Haven, Connecticut), Mrs Elizabeth Sims (Derby), Alfred Stead (Blackheath, London), Mr C G Sullivan (Yate, Gloucestershire), Harold Sunners (West Orange, New Jersey), Peter Thipthorp (Newport, Isle of Wight), Mr S D Wills (Colchester, Essex) and Paul Zagorski (Waupaca, Wisconsin).

The list is depressingly long but sadly reflects our age profile with many members passing on in their eighties or nineties. Each had in common a lifetime of interest in Bing's music and we are heartened to learn from their relatives or friends that all derived much enjoyment from their long time association with the club.

We cannot write in more detail about everyone we have lost but I must mention three people in particular.

Roy Edwards had a lifetime in show-business singing with the Oscar Rabin Band, with Geraldo and with the Squadronaires, the Royal Air Force Dance Orchestra. When television became the main entertainment medium, Roy found a way in via a Midlands TV show called *Lunch Box*. This was broadcast five days a week and continued for six years. The Jerry Allen Trio provided the music and Roy had to learn three new songs every day! In later years, Roy and his late wife Joyce became regular entertainers on cruise ships. Roy regularly came along to our Leeds gatherings and his warm hearted and friendly personality endeared him to everyone who met him.

Peter Thipthorp was a journalist all his life, and was editor to Photoplay, Showtime, and later the Tableware magazine. He must have interviewed about every major Hollywood star, and one memorable one for him was interviewing Bing at Shepperton whilst filming *The Road To Hong Kong*. He had an exclusive interview because all the other reporters surrounded Bob Hope!

Wally Oldfield was another regular at our Leeds meeting and Bert Bishop has written a short tribute on a subsequent page.

We extend our condolences to the family and friends of the above members.

BING CROSBY – THROUGH THE YEARS - 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 (Sepia Records)

These attractive CDs remain available from me with the price for the UK being £6.50 and the price for Europe £7.00. Members in the USA & Canada should obtain their copies from Wig Wiggins. The price for members in the rest of the world is £8. Volume 6 will be available in late September and you should order by returning the order form supplied in your magazine.

CROSBY CALENDAR 2011

Malcolm Macfarlane has kindly offered to continue producing the ICC's much admired calendar with photographs from the late Ron Bosley's collection and you should order by returning the enclosed slip.

Members' support for the calendar is vital if we are to cover our costs and thus ensure that the calendar continues to be published. Please buy a second copy if your funds allow.

LEEDS 2010

Sunday October 3rd 2010 is the date and please see the advert later in this issue.

My warmest greetings to all members.

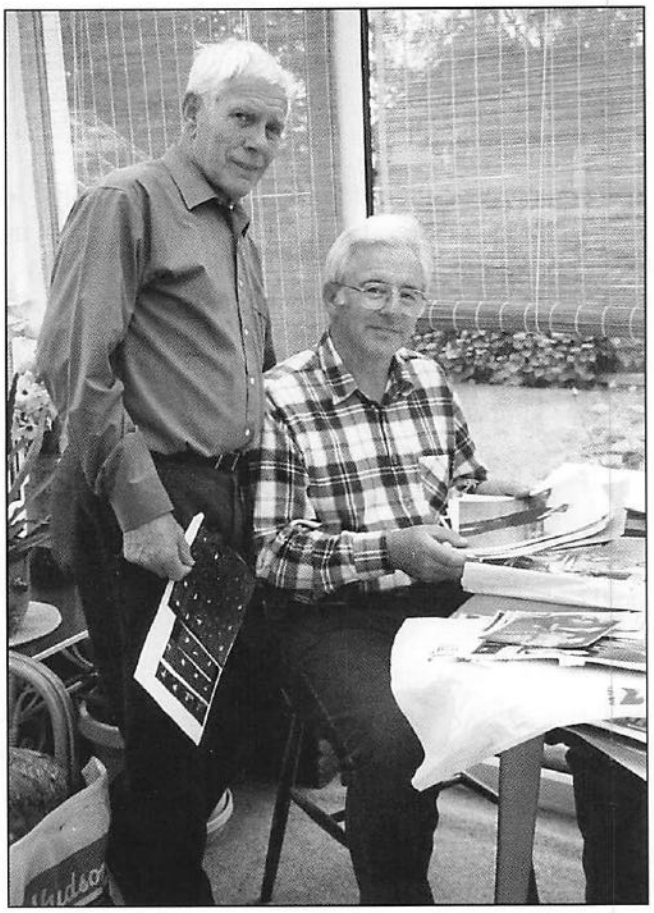
Michael Crampton

Ron Bosley 1923-2010

We mentioned that Ron was seriously ill in our last issue and sadly, as Greg and Michael have indicated, he passed away on April 6 at the age of 86. Ron had a busy and eventful life. RAF service as a wireless operator on bombers in WWII took him to North Africa and other parts of the world. Peacetime saw him working as a print manager at Norweb. He lost his first wife Joyce to cancer and later his son David died far too young. Ron found real happiness again when he married Vera and they had almost 22 years together.

Ron became a Bing fan at an early age and he took an especial interest in collecting photos and clippings of Bing. The lengths he went to in those pre-Internet days to obtain photos of our Mr. Crosby were amazing and he built up a wonderful collection of photos. His daughter Barbara told me how Ron sectioned off part of her bedroom when she was a little girl to use as a dark room to develop Bing pictures and the bath could not always be used as Ron would be utilising it to dry the photographs he had developed. The separate scrapbooks he put together were a wonderful reference source for me when I was researching my book *Bing Crosby – Day by Day*.

When BING magazine was relaunched following the death of Reg Bristo, it was to Ron we turned for photos. I used to travel over to his home at night after work with articles for the magazine and try to find pictures to go with the text. Ron and Vera always made me very welcome and I spent many happy hours with them. Ron often used to complain that his memory was not what it was, but mention a Bing photo to him and he would have instant recall. He would notice differences in photos which seemed identical to me. I could describe a Bing photograph to him over the phone and he would remember it and say things like "Is it the one where Bing's looking to the left or to the right?" His knowledge of Bing and his films was legendary. For many years, Ron supplied Crosby photos for TV documentaries and



Younger versions of Ron and your editor can be seen looking for photos for an issue of the magazine.

CDs as well as the magazine and the calendar.

I had almost tried to dissuade Ron from buying a computer because of the traumas they can create and at the age of 80 I wondered how he would cope. I'm glad that he ignored my gentle warnings because the Internet proved a real boon to him and he was a keen watcher and purchaser of Bing photos on eBay. As I needed photos for the magazine, I had only to contact him and a selection of 'possibles' was quickly provided by email. Ron prepared the Crosby calendar for many years and the latest one is a real testament to his enthusiasm for all things Bing.

Ron and I went off on a number of trips together to meet other Crosby fans and he was always good and interesting company. I shall always remember the dinner parties at my home on the Saturday before the Leeds meeting when Ron, Vera and Gwen Harvey would join Lionel and Joyce Pairpoint and Pat and I for a lively meal which got livelier as the evening progressed! One night we got Ron so, shall we say, "relaxed" he and Vera had to stay the night because he dared not drive home!

I called to see him when he was very ill and he was very concerned about what would happen to his wonderful collection. I suggested that his scrapbooks really ought to go to Gonzaga as they would be a tremendous aid to anyone who wanted to look at Bing's career. I promised to make sure that his collection would not be "thrown in a skip" as he feared.

On my last visit to see Ron he was rather depressed. I had brought with me some newspaper clippings about Bing and he immediately perked up and showed interest, passing observations about the standard of the reproduction of the photos. Ron was not one to display great enthusiasm and if he liked how his photos had been reproduced in the magazine, you might get a "Umm, that's not bad." Ron was quick to give me 'guidance' if I had not had his photos reproduced to his satisfaction in the magazine and I learned much from him.

I had the honour of delivering a tribute to Ron at his funeral service on behalf of the ICC. After the church service we went on to the crematorium where Ron had asked to have Bing's 1940 recording of "Stardust" played as we entered. The committal concluded with Bing's final recording of "Once in a While" which reduced most of those present to tears.

Ron will leave a huge gap in the BING magazine team and I shall really miss him. As a tribute to him, I shall prepare the Crosby Calendar this year using photographs from his collection.

Malcolm Macfarlane

Postscript

After Ron's death, I duly contacted Gonzaga but unfortunately they do not have a budget to cover the cost of shipping the scrapbooks and the photo albums and also they were concerned about the cost of the archival supplies needed to properly house the collection. They would need to put each photo into an acid-free enclosure. My estimate of the number of actual photos was well over 5000. However, each pocket containing a photo often has other copies of it which Ron might have made himself and which were not included in my figure. Gonzaga agreed to accept the collection if someone else would pick up the cost of shipping but they were still concerned about the cost of housing it and they were thinking of appealing in the magazine for Bing fans to help fund the preservation of Ron's collection. The collection would be known as the Ron Bosley Collection and would perpetuate his name and the incredible collected works he put together.

I have had an estimate for shipping the collection to Gonzaga and this has come out as:

Scrapbooks £523.

Photo albums £710.

A demanding £1233 in total, which is not easy to find in these difficult times.

In an effort to perpetuate Ron's name and preserve his collection, I am also exploring the possibility of the collection going to a British University or similar institution. If that proves unsuccessful and if funds cannot be found to ship the collection to Gonzaga, I shall, with regret, suggest to Vera Bosley that the photo collection is offered for sale through a top auctioneer which should then produce sufficient funds to transport the scrapbooks to Gonzaga.

Wally Oldfield

Bert Bishop has penned a tribute.

With the passing of Walter 'Wally' Oldfield at the age of 84, the ICC, and the 'Essex contingent' especially, have lost a valued member and dear friend.

Wally was an enthusiastic collector of anything and everything about Bing and there could not have been much in the world of Crosbyana that escaped his attention. However, he didn't just collect memorabilia for its own sake for if one ever called at his house he would be watching a film or show on his television or listening to any one of his countless 78s LPs or CDs playing upstairs or down; for his collection was literally floor to ceiling with even a converted roof space to explore [that included a super-eight cinema] for those keen enough to ascend the loft-ladder.

Generous to a fault, many will have been the unsolicited recipient of a CD or DVD of recently acquired Crosbyana which consequently enhanced the rarer corners of our collections.

Wally had a good voice and from a young age entertained in that way, being known throughout his life as 'the English Bing' [Denny Dennis not withstanding!]. Travelling with him on public transport was always an interesting experience as he would frequently break into a love song, usually directed at some young lady sitting nearby!

BBC Essex radio was also a frequent recipient of a 'phone-in' ballad and he was often able to put right a presenter who had erred in some way - and not just with Bing info, for Wally was knowledgeable and acquainted with many other artistes who figure in 'our kind of music'.

Along with John Bassett, Wally was the last member of the ICC to meet up with Bing in his hotel on the 6th October 1977, shortly before the latter's death, and was there as Bing recorded his last message to the ICC. A huge photograph of himself with his idol, capturing that event, took pride of place over his mantelpiece and is reproduced herewith.

My favourite anecdote relates to his acquisition of the bust of Bing which Wally had spotted in a shop in Jersey. This was just before his journey to the airport for the flight home. With no time to pack it in his luggage he arrived at Customs clutching his brown paper-wrapped parcel:

"What have you got there?" asked the customs officer.

"The head of Bing." responded Wally, enthusiastically.

A moment of disbelief clouded the officer's face before waving the triumphant collector through to the waiting plane!

Wally, we'll miss you dearly.

Bert Bishop

Happy Bing Day!

Ted S. McGregor Jr. had something to say in the Pacific Northwest Inlander of April 28.

Last week was the 100th anniversary of the death of Mark Twain, who most agree is America's greatest writer. I lived in Missouri, and there were reminders of his legacy everywhere. His birthplace is marked, along with his childhood home in Hannibal, where they even have preserved the houses belonging to the real people who inspired the characters of Huck Finn and Becky Thatcher.

Over in Connecticut, the grand Mark Twain House sees 50,000 visitors a year in Hartford. Even Nevada wants to share the glow by renaming a bay on Lake Tahoe "Sam Clemens Cove," as he once nearly burned down the forest there before he took the Twain name.

Point is, nobody's forgetting him. Is that true of Bing Crosby?

You could argue that Crosby is as important to music as Twain has been to literature, but casual visitors to Spokane have to be told of the Bing connection. It's like we want to keep it a secret.

Thankfully, the Advocates of the Bing Crosby Theater pushed the biggest step yet toward proper recognition — renaming the old Met Theater in honor of Spokane's most famous son. Really nice work, but I still think our Bing devotion is lacking.

Imagine a Bing Crosby museum, gift shop, maybe a restaurant — all connected to the theater. It would be a must stop for every Spokane tourist. The stars are actually aligned for such a project: There's an empty

building on the same block as the Bing, just to the south of it (you could probably connect them without much trouble); Gonzaga University has the world's best collection of Bing memorabilia; and there's already a chain of swanky Bing Crosby restaurants in California. Perhaps the Advocates and theater owner Mitch Silver could pull these threads together to give Bing his due. This, of course, would take money and effort — the community (that's you) would need to get behind it.

This week, on Monday, May 3, marks Bing Crosby's birthday, and the Bing Theater is welcoming everyone to celebrate. Starting at 6 pm, you can argue the merits of this column with friends over some cake and punch; at 7 pm, they'll screen *High Society* (starring Bing Crosby, Grace Kelly and Frank Sinatra, featuring Cole Porter songs). They'll project the film right up there on the same stage where old Bing got his musical start playing between silent films when it was the Clemmer Theater in the 1920s.

It's time for a Big Bing Bang.

Ted S. McGregor jr.

(Editor: And so say all of us! Wonder if they'd like some photographs and scrapbooks?)

At Sea with Bing and his friends

Much to his surprise, but considerable pleasure, your editor (accompanied by his wife) found himself as an enrichment speaker in May on the 160,000 ton *Independence of the Seas* sailing from Southampton on a 14-day cruise to the Mediterranean and back. I had been encouraged to put myself forward as a speaker two years ago by fellow passengers on another cruise but heard nothing at that time other than polite acknowledgments.

Then in March this year, I had an email from one of the agencies I had approached wishing to interview me by phone for 30 minutes. The interview duly took place on March 3 and within an hour I found myself booked on a cruise starting on May 15 which required me to have seven 45-minute PowerPoint presentations prepared for use if necessary. Naturally Bing was one of those presentations and the other talks I actually gave were on Perry Como, Vera Lynn and two talks aimed at those over 65 called "The Golden Age of Popular Music" and "More Memories of the Golden Age of Popular Music." In the telephone interview, I had been asked to prepare two other talks on British artists and off the top of my head I said "Michael Holliday" and "Frankie Vaughan". In the event, I did not have to deliver these but they are ready to be used in the future.

Each presentation I gave was timed for 1:30 p.m. on a day at sea. Not a great time with lunch in mind and with the weather absolutely wonderful, it was only really keen people who were likely to come down into the bowels of the ship to listen to me. Whilst the audiences were on the small side therefore, they were very enthusiastic and knowledgeable. I had been dealing with Ron Bosley's collection and I took along a lot of his old BING magazines to give out to those attending. The magazines were seized upon eagerly and hopefully we may pick up a member or two from them. I left some magazines in the ship's library too.

I have been booked on another cruise in December to the Canary Islands so I'll promote Bing on that one as well.

Bing on Facebook

In our last issue I described how the "Bing Crosby" Facebook page (maintained by Bing Crosby Enterprises) on the Internet had disappeared, having apparently been 'reported' for being offensive or abusive. During its absence I attempted to temporarily fill the gap by putting news items on to the ICC Facebook page. Fortunately the BCE page eventually reappeared and currently has over 7500 followers and is growing every day with mainly younger people, which is just what is needed with the future of Bing's legacy in mind.

We do not know who reported the BCE page but if it was a Crosby fan, I cannot imagine how an alleged admirer of Bing's could have stooped so low. Bing would have been appalled at such vindictive behavior.

The ICC initially set up a Facebook page called Bing Crosby (ICC) mainly as a link to the BING magazine website but with the return of BCE's Bing Crosby page we found ourselves duplicating news information appearing on the BCE page. It seemed to make sense to close the ICC Facebook page down and direct our members to the BCE page. This would save members having to look at both sites for information. The ICC page had only 125 followers and your Editor was the only one making any contributions.

This proposal was debated on the site and several members were not happy with my decision. I explained that I was also trying to ease some of my Bing Crosby workload and that this course of action seemed to be something that would cause the least inconvenience. In the circumstances, having considered the various arguments, I decided to go ahead and close the site down and I apologise if this has caused anyone distress or inconvenience.

Malcolm Macfarlane

Kathryn Crosby: My Life with Bing

As we went to print, Kathryn was scheduled to be presenting her one-woman show at the Cabaret at the Castle in Hollywood on June 28 and 29. She was to be accompanied by pianist Edward Sayegh. Kathryn performed this show last year to sold out crowds at Feinstein's at the prestigious Regency Hotel in New York, at the Friars Club in Beverly Hills and many other

venues across the country. In addition to numerous hit songs and stories, the show includes a multi-media presentation with film clips that follow the lives of Kathryn and Bing from their Las Vegas wedding as well as footage of Bing and Bob Hope on the golf course, and home movies of Bing welcoming his first daughter Mary. The show contains a celebration of Holiday music, which will of course include "White Christmas".

Remembering Bing

This is the title of the video and audio presentation George O'Reilly has been making in the Dublin area in Ireland to aid various charities. His first presentation was on April 19 at the Deer Park Hotel in Howth and George featured excerpts from the TV special *A Little Bit of Irish* and from RTE's *Bing's Favourite Irishman*. George is a real marvel in the way he keeps Bing's image alive in the Emerald Isle.

Cynthia Crosby

Cynthia is the granddaughter of Larry Crosby and the daughter of Jack Crosby. She is therefore Bing's great-niece and she came to the UK in February in connection with her job.

Michael Crampton and your editor had the great pleasure of meeting Cynthia during her visit and we all agreed how important Larry Crosby had been to Bing's career. He handled many public relations matters for Bing and dealt with the admin work associated with Bing's charitable undertakings, including the golf tournament. In many ways, he was almost Bing's moral compass. Carolyn Schneider wrote in depth about Larry in BING #147. Cynthia's grandmother, Elaine, was close to Dixie until her death and used to say that she dated Bing before she married Larry. She had decided that Larry had a better future ahead of him! Cynthia's names for her grandparents were Gabby and Gripes, with Larry being Gripes. Cynthia's grandmother (who had a very good sense of humor) didn't want to be called grandma, so she made up those names.

Cynthia's father, Jack, (now aged 83 and living in Las Vegas) was a very successful set designer in Hollywood and has many interesting stories to tell about Bing and the children of the first family. Cynthia will sit down and 'interview' him in the coming months in order to get some of these stories on paper.

As a child, Cynthia remembered being taken to Bing's house in South Mapleton Drive, Hollywood and particularly recalls being very impressed by the Christmas tree which had been professionally dressed by an outside firm. Her last meeting with Bing was at her grandfather's funeral. She and Bing had a pleasant talk and as always he was warm and friendly.

Jake Hanna, who had just died when we met Cynthia, was a friend of Cynthia's and she had many amusing talks with him. Jake revered Bing and Cynthia said that it was a great pity that we had not interviewed him before his death. Hopefully Gary Giddins picked him up during his research for the second part of his biography of Bing.

Cynthia and Michael Crampton share memories of Bing.

Cynthia, who is a Beatles fan (but we won't hold that against her), was not aware that Bing had recorded a song called "Cynthia" and I was delighted to be able to send her a copy of this.

She hopes to return to the UK again in connection with her work and we said that we should love to see her at our annual Leeds meeting.

Malcolm Macfarlane

(Editor: See the article "Bing's Comeback" later in this issue for more about Larry Crosby.)

Rosemary Clooney

Research continues for the book Ken Crossland and I are putting together. I interviewed cornet player Warren Vaché and saxophonist Scott Hamilton in June as they worked with Rose on her many records for Concord Jazz. Mr. Hamilton's first work for Concord was on the album 'A Tribute to Duke' on which Bing sang 'Don't Get Around Much Anymore'. Scott told me that because of the accident at the Pasadena show, Bing could not attend the actual recording session with the musicians to do the track 'live' and the track had to be laid down for Bing to add his voice to it later. Scott never actually met Bing much to his regret. In talking about Rose I asked Scott about Rose's feel for jazz and he said that with a jazz singer "it's in the rhythm" and "nobody was stronger or more secure rhythmically than Rosemary."

He had never worked with a musician who had Rosemary's possession of the beat. She could show the band where the tempo was and could make things move in two notes. "That's how much power there was in her internal clock. I'm sure that Bing developed that in her but it had to be in her to begin with."

Nice to see Bing's influence recognised in this way.

Bing Crosby's Restaurant Shuts Down

We were very sorry to see this item on the web site for KESQ-TV in Palm Springs on June 14.

Rancho Mirage Eatery Evicted Amid Claims Owners Didn't Pay Taxes

Hopes were high for the restaurant Bing Crosby's when its doors opened nearly six years ago in Rancho Mirage. But, a county tax-collector notice of seizure posted on the restaurant's door shows that Bing's hasn't been paying the bills. The restaurant's last day of operation was Saturday June 12, according to former employees.

According to the Riverside County tax collector's office, the restaurant has failed to pay more than $95,000 in taxes between 2007 and June 9, 2010. Management plans on reopening in October, according to employees. But those same employees have already filed for unemployment.

The U-Haul truck was parked in the back parking lot, where former employees filled it up with what was left of Bing Crosby's.

"I loved my job here," said Chris Kelin, recently unemployed. "It was great."

Richard Atkins, a former Bing Crosby's bartender, said he is "sad. I really liked the place."

Residents were shocked when they pulled up to the parking lot and heard the restaurant was no longer open.

"I don't know what to say," said Steve Bethke, who is sad to see the restaurant close. "I'm just flabbergasted."

"I guess it's a sign of the times," said Mark Bengtson, who visited Bing Crosby's frequently.

Dated June 9, 2010, the notice of seizure posted on the door said Bing Crosby's Restaurant has been seized for the purpose of enforcing the collection of unpaid taxes. The amount due at the end of the seizure was $95,613.34.

"We put up with a lot of stuff," said Klein, who worked for the restaurant for nearly four years.

"I've never had a paycheck that went through the very first time I went to cash it," said Atkins.

"Go ask Bank of America, 'what do you know about Bing Crosby's checks?' Ask them right over here," said Klein. "They'll tell you that the funds are not available."

Klein said he loved his job and his co-workers. But, the constant hassle of cashing company checks was a hint that the restaurant was struggling financially, he said.

"They always came through for us. At one point or another, we got our money," he said. "But, you know, they left us two weeks notice to clear out, [and told] us they were going to re-open October 1. [But] we all know that's not happening."

Mark Bengston said he had no idea that his last dinner at Bing Crosby's a few weeks ago could be his last meal there ever.

"I always thought it was crowded, and every time we've ever been, it's been packed," he said. "The food is excellent. It's just too bad."

When asked if the closure made the nationwide recession hit home, Lloyd Johnson replied "you bet. Does it ever."

Dudum Sports and Entertainment owns the restaurant, but they were unavailable for comment. The Bing Crosby's in Walnut Creek up in Northern California said that they have no plans to close. But the San Diego location wouldn't comment on whether or not it was going out of business.

Philippe Djegal, News Channel 3 Reporter

(Editor: Though the restaurant was named Bing Crosby's, Bing's family was not involved in the operation. The restaurant did however give Bing some great publicity and this development is a real blow.)

HLC Properties vs. UMG

The long running legal battle between Bing's estate and Universal Music Group went into court in June. The estate is seeking three things from Universal Music Group:

1. The return of all of Bing's Decca masters (including "White Christmas"),
2. A proper audit of sales for the past 33 years,
3. Payment of all back royalties.

This is a very important and crucial case and the outcome will be reported in due course - or later in this issue if information becomes available.

Crosby Estate Loses Bid to Toss Claim by First Wife's Heirs

Kathryn and her family must be very tired of legal disputes and there was news of another in the *Metropolitan News-Enterprise of* June 14.

The estate of Bing Crosby's first wife may have a community property interest in Crosby's right of publicity under a 2008 law retroactively making such interests transferable, Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Michael I. Levanas ruled Friday.

Levanas, who issued a tentative ruling in favor of Dixie Lee Crosby's estate last month, denied a motion for judgment on the pleadings brought by the Bing Crosby estate.

The judge agreed with the Dixie Lee Crosby estate that the interest should be considered newly-discovered property for probate purposes. But he also ruled that Crosby's second wife, Kathryn Grant Crosby, may have an interest in the property and gave the first wife's estate 20 days to name her in an amended petition.

Born Wilma Wyatt, actress and singer Dixie Crosby married Bing Crosby in 1930. She died of cancer in 1952 at age 40, predeceasing her husband, who died in 1977.

The pair had four sons: Gary, twins Dennis and Phillip, and Lindsay. Bing Crosby, who was born Harry Lillis Crosby, married his second wife in 1957; they had three children together.

In 1979, the California Supreme Court ruled in *Lugosi v. Universal Pictures* (1979) 25 Cal.3d 813 that an individual's right of publicity "protects against the unauthorized use of one's name, likeness, or personality."

In 1984, the Legislature created a post-mortem right of publicity for deceased personalities, which could be willed or transferred. In 2007, however, federal judges in New York and California ruled that Marilyn Monroe could not have passed post-mortem rights of publicity through the residuary clause in her will because those rights did not exist when she died.

Later that year, however, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed a law expanding Civil Code Sec. 3344.1's statutory right of publicity to be retroactive and transferable, even if the celebrity died before the 1984 law was enacted.

The law provided that where a deceased celebrity's statutory heirs did not assert those rights on or before May 1, 2007, and there was no specific disposition of them in the testamentary instrument, the rights would pass under the instrument's residuary clause.

Probate proceedings in Dixie Crosby's estate were revived shortly thereafter, and her grandson, Philip Crosby's son Bing, in May 2009 petitioned for ownership. He argued that Dixie Crosby's community property interest in her husband's publicity rights was now the property of her trust, pursuant to her will.

Opposing her petition, HLC Properties, Ltd., which was established to manage Bing Crosby's assets after his death, argued that the petition was untimely.

HLC also contended that the claims were foreclosed by a detailed agreement between Bing and Dixie Crosby's estates whereby Dixie Crosby's estate received $1.5 million in exchange for warranting that all community property rights had been transferred and waiving any other obligations pre-dating the agreement or that the estate "might have."

The petitioner, however, argued that the 1999 settlement merely resolved issues of money owed, and did not contemplate any question of ownership of publicity rights.

Levanas explained Friday that the legislation enacted in 2007 "rendered the decisions of the courts in [the Marilyn Monroe litigation] invalid and cut-off the rights of statutory heirs where there is a testamentary instrument with a residual clause."

The new law "in effect caused a 'reboot' of" Sec. 3344.1 "with a January 1, 2008 effective date for a new statute of limitations period for testamentary heirs," the judge said in a footnote.

The judge went on to say that because the 1999 agreement was confidential and not made a part of the record in the prior litigation, he could not consider it as part of the motion for judgment on the pleadings.

Susan Cooley of Oldman Cooley Leighton Sallus in Encino represented HLC Properties, Ltd., while Henry K. Workman of Sullivan, Workman and Dee represented the Dixie Lee Crosby interests.

The case is *In re Crosby*, P334700.

(Editor: Can't say that I fully understand the ramifications of all this but no doubt all will become clear in due course.)

Hope Springs Eternal

Linda Hope, Bob's daughter, was at the Library of Congress Packard Campus Theater in Culpeper, Va. on June 9 to give firsthand memories of his home life and career. Linda is a longtime TV producer who serves as president of the Bob Hope Legacy in California. She was visiting the East Coast for the June 11 opening of "Hope for America," a new exhibit in the Bob Hope Gallery in the Jefferson Building at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., and she agreed to stop by the Culpeper campus for Audio Visual Conservation, where many of her father's film, radio and TV recordings are stored.

Of Bob's relationship with Bing, Linda Hope said it was very special.

"They went way back and respected each other's talent," she said, "But you couldn't find two guys more different that those two were."

Bob Hope was always joking and playing jokes on Crosby, while Bing was very serious and competitive, especially at golf, Linda Hope said, launching into a story about how the two would always connive for time away on the green while filming.

"They used to drive the directors crazy," she said, noting they would skip off to a golfing area Paramount had created for them at the studio or over to a practice tee at a nearby course.

"They'd check with the lighting guys, find out how long it was going to take to light the next scene, and they'd say, 'Oh, 45 minutes or so.' And then dad would say, 'See you in an hour and a half.'"

A "Lost" Bing Crosby Feature Film Appearance

Greg Van Beek has made another discovery!

It isn't often that one discovers a hereto unknown appearance by Bing Crosby in a feature film. His films have been well documented over the years, most notably by Fred Reynolds in his marvelous book "The Road To Hollywood". But even this title escaped the research of Mr. Reynolds.

In 1972, Great Owl Corporation, in association with ABC Sports, presented **The World of Sport Fishing**. The film was produced in Eastman color by Leonard Gruenberg and directed by Bud Morgan, from a screenplay by Pat Smith. Location producers included Robert Bendick, Dick Dorley, Curt Gowdy, Lorne Hassan, Larry Prockter, and Scott Ransom. Location directors were Robert Bendick, Robert Duncan, Urs Furrer, Lorne Hassan, Larry Prockter, Scott Ransom, Francis C. Wood, and Lee Wulff. It was touted as "An entertainment adventure for the whole family", where one could "Thrill to the challenge of tackle-busting adventure. The fighting game fish of the world take on the greatest sportsman alive, and YOU ARE THERE!"

The 90 minute film boasted a long list of star anglers, billed in this order: Curt Gowdy, Ernest Borgnine, Joe Brooks, Bing Crosby, Ken Curtis, Vic Dunnaway, Phil Harris, Gil Hamm, Van Heflin, Bob Lewis, Jack Nicklaus, Al Pflueger, Joan Salvato, Gene Stallings, Milburn Stone, John Wilhelm, and Lee Wulff.

Curt Gowdy serves as narrator throughout, and his opening words set the tone of the film; "Like the sea itself, fishing wears a thousand faces. But beneath those faces, beneath the solitude, the laughter, and the love, there's a mystery to fishing. A sense of the unexpected that lures men of every sort to the world of sport fishing."

I had an opportunity to view the film recently from a rather worn 16mm print. Each of the various fishing segments lasts from five to fifteen minutes each. It begins with Curt Gowdy and Joe Brooks fishing for Barracuda, Bone Fish, and Permit in the Flats near Key West, Florida. From there, we find Gene Stallings, football coach at Texas A&M, and John Wilhelm, Florida fishing expert, fishing for Blue Bass.

Next, two stars of TV's *Gunsmoke*, Milburn Stone (Doc) and Ken Curtis (Festus), join Minnesota guide Gil Hamm fishing in that state for Muskies. They are followed by the one and only Phil Harris, who opens his segment singing "It's A Good Day" with a guitar accompaniment. He, along with Curt Gowdy and guide Jack Dennis, are off trout fishing on the Snake River in Wyoming. Phil's ad-libs are legendary, and he doesn't disappoint here. "Do you think Alice (Faye) will like this over her headboard?" says Phil, as he holds up a still-fighting catch. He adds "I'm not talkin' 'bout stuffed, just the way he is!" Later, around the campfire, Phil is serving up the trout he just finishing preparing. After Curt Gowdy pronounces Phil's cooking "superb", Phil quips "Gee, mom, it's a busher!"

From Phil Harris' antics, we move on to Academy Award winning actor Ernest Borgnine, who, along with Curt and guide Al Pflueger, is fishing the Barrier Reef in Australia for groupers. This is followed by our man Bing, fishing the Laxamaryi River in Iceland for Atlantic salmon with outdoor writer Bud Boyd and their guide Axel Geiselsen.

Using my co-editor Malcolm Macfarlane's excellent book "Bing Crosby: Day By Day", I learned Bing was in Iceland in July of 1969, and his fishing excursion there was filmed. Prior to its appearance in **The World of Sport Fishing**, it aired on ABC television as the February 8, 1970 episode of American Sportsman, the TV series from which most (if not all) of the segments that appear in this feature film seem to have originated.

In introducing Bing's segment, Curt Gowdy proclaims; "Like most of his brothers, Crosby regards salmon angling as less a diversion than an avocation that requires a specific set of trappings, including handmade rods and custom tailored clothing, demanding strict adherence to certain stream side amenities, like chatting with your gillie. To lose a fish is pardonable. To break with tradition by uttering a harsh word is cause for banishment from the brotherhood."

Bing asks his "gillie", or guide Axel "Do you fish here all year 'round?" Axel replies "No, I'm studying in Copenhagen." This brings a smile to Bing's face. "Oh what a life you've got. You got it made, dad! Copenhagen, gay, happy, riotous Copenhagen. The Tivoli Gardens and the salmon waters in the summer. How nice can it be!"

Axel watches Bing carefully

As he stands in the water just off shore, Bing asks Axel "Do you think I'm putting it out there OK?" Axel says "Yeah that's good, just a little bit closer to the bank." Bing: "Before I start retrieving it, huh?" Axel: "Yeah." Finally, Bing hooks a fish. "Hey! He's on there!" he exclaims. "I hit him! I hit him pretty good. I think it's sunk in there." Bud Boyd asks "Have you

seen him yet?" Bing says "No, I haven't seen him, but I'm gonna see him soon, I hope!" Bud then asks Bing how big he thinks the salmon is? Bing says "I guess fifteen" (pounds). As the fish comes up out of the water, Bing says "No, he's about fourteen pounds. He's goin' uptown, Axel!" and starts singing "He's going up the Laxa river, to his old hometown." "Go, Daddy!" Bing exclaims as he begins to reel him in. Axel says it's a beautiful fish, and Bing quips "Yes, I'll tell him when he comes in!" Continuing to reel in the fish, Bing says "Go up against that current, that's got to take some of the zeal out of him." At this point, Bud tells Bing it's getting cold, to which Bing says "Getting cold for anybody that doesn't have a fish on. Only cold for spectators!" Bud is getting nervous, and Bing laughingly says "No, this is the crucial moment here. You just hope that that fly is imbedded into a piece of bone."

Spotting a patch of grass wrapped around the line, Bing makes a clever observation. "He's got all that grass around the hook, he looks like a hippie!" Axel begins to pull in the salmon and Bing tells him "Nice going, Axel!" Axel lays the still flopping and fighting fish on the ground, and Bing puts his foot on it, saying "Down, down Gilmore!" Bing grabs the patch of grass off of the line and remarks about the "piece of 'hair' I had." Axel thinks the fish does indeed weigh fourteen to sixteen pounds. And so ends Bing's segment, at a mere five minutes in length.

From Iceland, the film moves on to the Tropics and the San Juan River in Nicaragua. Golfer Jack Nicklaus and light tackle expert Lee Wulff are fishing for El Tarpon, a salmon-like fish. From there it's on to Labrador in the Tropics, with Lee Wulff fishing for Brook Trout. The final segment features Lee Wulff and his wife Joan Salvato fishing Conception Bay in Newfoundland for Blue Fin Tuna.

The film was released and distributed by Allied Artists, and copyrighted 1971. It was released theatrically in early 1972 on a limited basis, and even awarded a rating of "G", for general audiences, by the Motion Picture Association of America. A 'one-sheet' movie poster was distributed to theaters, as were 8 x 10 promotional photos. Just how many theaters carried the film, and for how long it ran, is still a mystery. I speculate it may have also been shown in non-theatrical venues, such as the American League of Anglers convention and/or other fishing related events and trade shows. It certainly aired on ABC television at some point in 1972-73 as well.

Greg Van Beek

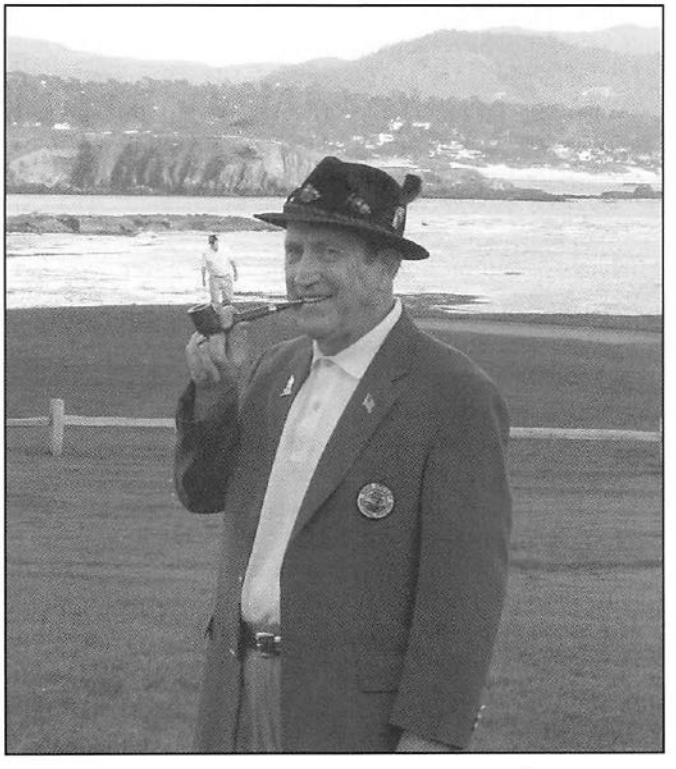
(Editor: Thanks, Greg. Iceland and one of its volcanoes has of course become very well known to us in Europe in recent months!

Greg also had an article in the March / April edition of Front Wheel Driver magazine, the publication of the Toronado Owners Association. Greg is a technical adviser for the 1971-78 second generation Toronados for the organisation. His article was entitled "Clambake Tornados: One Great Drive After Another." This was similar to the piece he wrote for us in BING #153 but gave Greg the opportunity to expose Bing to a different audience. Well done, Greg!)

Tribute to Bing

Bob Pasch continues with his *Tribute to Bing* show and he brings us up-to-date with his latest activities.

2010 marked the 50th Anniversary for the 3M's Corporation's connection with the Bing Crosby Pro-Am at Pebble Beach, known today as the AT& T Pro-Am. In recognition of the many years that 3M worked with Bing Crosby, they held a Clambake at the Beach Club on February 11th as part of the festivities. Their ad appeared on the back cover of the golf program for many years. I was pleased to be asked to be part of this celebration by performing my *Tribute to Bing*. This was my first appearance at Pebble Beach which I considered to be a privilege. I performed with Dennis Murphy's band singing five of Bing's songs including his theme song "Blue of the Night" and "Straight Down the Middle." Attending the event was Cody Plott, CEO and Chief Financial Officer of Pebble Beach, and Ollie Nutt, President and CEO for the Monterey Peninsula Foundation, who both spoke of the history and future of this event. I can report that the people at Pebble Beach have not forgotten Bing and his contributions to golf along with his many charitable contributions in the Monterey area.



Bob, in his Bing outfit, stands on the 18th green at Pebble Beach.

On March 14, my wife, Lenora, and I returned to Pebble Beach to experience its beauty and magic. I had an opportunity to play both Spyglass and Pebble Beach. Although my final score is classified, I did par the signature seventh hole at Pebble Beach with the pin placement set as it was on the Sunday for this year's US Open. This was definitely one of the highlights of my trip! My caddie, when he was in his youth, had met Bing and had many interesting stories about the history of Pebble Beach and showed us where Bing had lived on the 13th fairway. He was only one of many people we met that had known Bing and related their stories of what it was like when Bing ran the Pro-Am.

We stayed at the lodge and were upgraded to a room overlooking the 18th green and the ocean. (Thanks Bing) As a special surprise, I had a dozen roses delivered to the room for my wife which added to the wonderful experience. Looking out the window of our room will long be remembered. In the evening, as we sat by the fireplace at the Lodge with a toddy, you could feel the spirit of Bing. I sang a few tunes for other guests in the Lodge by the fireplace and in the Tap Room which featured many photos of Bing and past tournaments. The guests appreciated the extra perk of a few Bing songs which added to their visit.

While at Pebble, we had an opportunity to meet with Cody Plott and discussed the possibilities of future *Tribute to Bing* Shows. He talked about the many clambakes they hold throughout the year and how the people still think of the AT&T as the Bing Crosby Pro-Am. Bing's memory is still very much alive at Pebble Beach.

I have been doing my *Tribute to Bing* now for over 30 years. It still amazes me how much people love the music that Bing made famous.

Bob Pasch

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of $3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Carmela Amari, 75 Essex Drive Apt., 1J Staten Island, NY 10314, USA (tel: 718-524-6609, email: amari_frank@yahoo.com)

Carmela would like to acquire photos of Bing from the 30's and 40's. Please contact her if you can help.

Gord Atkinson, 14 Castle Harbour Crt., Ottawa, ON K2S 1B9, Canada.

Gord's *The Crosby Years* series remains available direct from him. US members can obtain the CDs for $16.00 US each which includes postage. Canadian purchasers should pay CAN $16.00 for each CD. Payment can be made by check or money order to Gord Atkinson. Please note that USA members may send US dollar checks.

UK, Irish and European members who wish to obtain the CDs should contact Malcolm Macfarlane. The CDs cost £10 each.

Michael Crampton, address on inside front cover.

Michael has recently obtained, from the original printer, a supply of the book "Alternate Bing Crosby" by Colin Pugh which was published in 1988. Running to 159 pages, it gives details of the many alternate takes Bing made. If you would like a copy, send £3.50 to Michael Crampton. Europe and Ireland members should send £4.50. Also Michael has many spare copies of old issues of BING magazine and please contact him if you would like to pick some up for a nominal figure. There are still some copies left of the excellent book covering Bing's TV appearances and Michael is offering these at the hugely discounted price of only £5.99 including postage.

Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, USA (Tel. & Fax: (952) 470-2172, e-mail: Fesfilms@aol.com – website: www.fesfilms.com/)

Ron Hall at Festival Films can meet all your NTSC requirements for Bing on DVD and video.

Mike Kaptanis, New York, USA. (Tel. 914-779-9728, e-mail. mmgkaptan@aol.com)

For Bing Crosby collectors who may be fortunate to possess a 16" turntable, I can offer radio transcriptions featuring Crosby that were issued commercially and non-commercially, all in nice condition. A few of the ET's include Bing's Philco radio show, original acetates from 1947-49. Among the other shows that feature Bing are "Navy Music On Deck", Red Cross Shows, Treasury Dept. "Guest Star" AFRS and others.

Malcolm Macfarlane, address on inside front cover.

I am dealing with the sale of the residue of Ron Bosley's Crosby collection and if there are any Crosby CDs, DVDs or books you need, give me a quick call or email and I'll tell you if it's available.

The Record Centre, 43, Presthope Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 4NJ, UK (Tel: 0121-476-9619, e-mail: Raypurslow@blueyonder.co.uk)

Mail Order only. Ray Purslow has always been a real supporter of the Crosby cause and for your Bing CDs, contact Ray.

Worlds Records, P. O. Box 1922, Novato CA 94947, USA (phone: 1-800-742-6663) www.worldsrecords.com/

Try this company for CDs imported from the UK and elsewhere.

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Crosby Clubs Around the World

The ICC is very pleased to be associated with the Australian Bing Crosby Society. The society's details are:

The Australian Bing Crosby Society

Peter De Ryk, 11 Holden Rd., Kallista, Victoria 3791, Australia. (tel. [03] 9755 3013 – email: deryk@net2000.com.au)

Bi-monthly newsletters are issued and there are regular film nights. In June, the Crosby film was *East Side of Heaven* supported by part 2 of *The Great American Songbook* (2003) presented by Michael Feinstein. Film nights still to come this year are on August 17, October 19 and December 7 at Mamma Vittoria's, 343 Smith St. (1st floor), Fitzroy, Victoria.

Internet sites:

www.BingCrosby.com

This comes under the Bing Crosby Enterprises banner and contains rare photos of Bing, radio shows, recordings and clips from Bing's films.

Bing Crosby on Facebook

This also comes under the auspices of Bing Crosby Enterprises and Bing's Facebook page is at:

www.facebook.com/pages/Bing-Crosby/44544738326

BING magazine

This site contains a considerable amount of reference material, some of which used to be on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum - www.bingmagazine.co.uk

A Bing Crosby Discography

Maintained by our member, J. Richard Baker (known as Jarbie), this excellent site can be found at:

http://tinyurl.com/BingCrosbyDiscography

The Bing Crosby Free Speech Fan Forum

Set up by Steve Fay, this new site has a wide varying discussion group. Go to:
http://tinyurl.com/BingCrosbyForum

The Immortal Talents of Bing Crosby

http://lakeprovidencegirl.com/bing.html
This is an impressive web site maintained by our member, Crissi Newton. Well worth a look.

OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

In Tune International, Flat 9, Milchester House, 12 Staveley Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN20 7JX, UK, (Tel/Fax: +44 (0) 1323 412698) website: www.intuneinternational.com)

Described as the magazine for lovers of the golden age of popular music, this excellent periodical contains 40 pages about nostalgic and easy listening music.

International Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 15 Kilpin Hill Lane, Staincliffe, West Yorkshire, WF13 4BG, UK (phone: 01924 401909, e-mail: markfoxtbas@hotmail.com).

Nat King Cole International Fan Club, c/o Roy Holmes, 18 Rutland Drive, Morden, Surrey SM4 5QH, UK (phone: 020-8648-8858, web page:

www.highstreets.co.uk/kcc/index.shtml)

King Cole Comments is the club's newsletter and this is issued three times each year. For a free copy, please send a SAE to Roy Holmes.

Friends of Doris Day, c/o Dr. Sue Gökgör, 71 East Avenue, Oxford OX4 1XR, UK. eMail: suegokgor@aol.com

Started in 1997, The Friends of Doris Day is an international Doris Day appreciation club based in Oxford, UK - and the only Doris Day fan club in the UK. The club publishes three 32 page magazines a year, packed full of articles and information you won't find anywhere else, including memorabilia signed by Doris herself for auction or sale. Subscription is £16 for UK members, £21 (or equivalent in Euro or US$) for Europe, £22 (or equivalent in US$) for other countries.

The Deanna Durbin Society, c/o Justin Clarke, 21 Main Rd., Wetley Rocks, Stoke-On-Trent, ST9 0BH, UK (phone: 01782 551103).

Dick Haymes Society, c/o Roger L. Dooner, 2951 Tyler St., NE Minneapolis, MN 55418, USA, or Maurice Dunn, 16 Cradley Park Road, Netherton, Dudley West Midlands, DY2 9SR, UK

(Web site: www.dickhaymes.com/dhsociety/index.html)

International Al Jolson Society, c/o John Wehrman, 1195 Hickory Hill Drive, Green Bay, WI 54304, USA (e-mail: JWWehrman@aol.com - web site: www.jolson.org)

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email: tony@flias.com ,

website: http://homepages.tesco.net/flias/)

Sinatra Music Society - Mrs. Pat Harvey, National Secretary, 11 Mossbank Avenue, Burntwood, Staffordshire WS7 4UN, UK (tel: 01543-317743).

A bi-monthly magazine called *Perfectly Frank* is issued. Fees within the UK are £15 a year; £19 for European membership and £23 for the rest of the world. Web page: http://sinatramusicsociety.googlepages.com/

Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 01 8212418).

Meetings take place at 8:00 pm, second Monday of every month, The Montrose Hotel, Donnybrook, Dublin 4.

International Andy Williams Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 5, Westerham, Kent TN16 1UE, UK

The club has been running since 1967 and membership costs £6.50 (UK), £7.50 (Europe) and $15 (USA). A quarterly newsletter is issued.

Books 'n' Bing

Ask Me If I'm Happy: An Actor's Life

by Peter Bowles, published by Simon & Schuster on April 29 at £17.99, hardcover book with 320 pages.

ISBN-10: 184737767X, ISBN-13: 978-1847377678.

Margaret Kliskey of Chelmsford in Essex drew our attention to this book by British actor Peter Bowles, extracts from which were printed in the Daily Mail in April with an intriguing headline. Here's a sample.

...the night Bing Crosby stole my girlfriend

And so on to the U.S. and New York, where I can truthfully say I never really slept.

The adrenaline flow was too powerful. I honestly felt as though I was in a film; all those huge-finned cars and yellow taxis, and stick-swinging cops, 'Walk', 'Don't Walk' signs, the automat, drugstores and - yes - they spoke like they did in films.

I can't clearly remember now when, or even where, I met Maggie Smith in New York, but when I did meet her I fell for her. Maggie was one of many stars in an annual and famous review on Broadway called New Faces. Everything went well between us that first night, and I began to date her after her show.

Maggie would have been around 22 at the time, I suppose, and apart from her dazzling looks and figure, she had, as you might imagine, a fizzing personality and a wicked sense of humour.

I was well and truly hooked, but I had begun to suspect she wasn't. I discovered my suspicions were well-founded in rather humiliating circumstances.

Judy Garland had made a huge comeback and was appearing at the apex of variety, the Palace Theatre New York. She was giving a midnight matinee for actors and entertainers, and I asked Maggie if she would like to go with me. Oh yes, she most certainly would.

'I'll book two seats in the stalls and come round after your show and pick you up.'

'Lovely,' she said. The evening arrived. I hurried excitedly to her stage door, the tickets safely in my pocket. The stage door keeper, who knew me well by now, said with awe in his voice: 'Bing Crosby has just gone up to Miss Smith's dressing room and he was carrying a large bunch of flowers.'

Now, Elvis was big at that time, but Bing was BIG TIME with capital letters.

I knocked and went in. Maggie was standing looking lovely with a large bouquet in her hands and there was the unmistakable figure of Bing Crosby, in a dinner jacket.

'Can I introduce you to Bing Crosby?' said Maggie. I said hello, and shook his hand.

Bing then said: 'Miss Smith, I would consider it an honour if you would join me in my box for the Judy Garland midnight matinee tonight.'

'Oh, I'd love to,' said Maggie without so much as a glance in my direction. I made my excuses and left.

I enjoyed enormously the Judy Garland show (she brought on both her little girls), despite the empty seat beside me.

I didn't see Dame Maggie Smith again for another 50 years, but when we did meet we were charming to each other.

She looked just as beautiful as when I'd first met her. My only regret is that I have never acted with her.

So what with one thing and another, by the time we boarded the plane for London six months later I honestly thought as it took off: 'If this plane crashes, I at least won't mind, because I have had the most wonderful life.'

And I was just 20 years old!

Next, Martin McQuade reports on two more new books which mention Bing.

2. Three Chords for Beauty's Sake: The Life of Artie Shaw

By Tom Nolan, published by W.W. Norton and Company on May 3 at $29.95 (Amazon $19.77), hardcover, 430 pages. ISBN-10: 0393062015, ISBN-13: 978-0393062014.

A new biography of Artie Shaw by Tom Nolan, sheds some light on the famed clarinetist's relationship with Bing Crosby.

Nolan reports, "In August [1931], Art was hired as a member of the CBS radio orchestra. Shaw would now be working every day in company with the best players in New York.: Manny Klein: Bunny Berigan; Tommy Dorsey and another trombonist Jerry Colonna; Jimmy Dorsey (often playing second alto to Art's lead), violinist Joe Venuti; guitarist Eddie Lang. All the best white jazzmen were in the network radio orchestra; it was the only way they could make a living. On September 2, 1931, a month after the death of Bix [Beiderbecke], a series debuted on CBS that would change American popular music. It starred the singer Bing Crosby."

Nolan continues. "Art had first seen and heard Bing in Cleveland when Crosby was part of Paul Whiteman's Rhythm Boys. He had met Crosby a year ago in Hollywood, when Bing came by The Blossom Room to sing with the [Irving] Aaronson band a few times. Now Art was in the orchestra for Crosby's CBS broadcast, along with Tommy Dorsey, Joe Venuti, and (right by Bing's side, feeding him rhythm) Eddie Lang. Crosby – who had already recorded with the best white jazzmen, including Bix, and caroused and sung with black performers such as Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington – was an immediate coast-to-coast hit with his relaxed jazz-derived 'crooning.'"

Nolan refers to Shaw's remarks from Gary Giddins' biography. "Bing was an enormous influence. You couldn't avoid him. He had a good beat. He was a jazz singer, he knew what jazz was, and could sing a lyric, say the words, and make you hear the notes. Bing could swing."

Nolan speculates that Shaw was motivated by his exposure to Crosby's burgeoning fame. "Crosby perhaps was on Shaw's mind when he stood in Central Park one

evening with an unnamed friend - maybe Claude Thornhill – and gazed at the thousands of windows in the buildings of the Manhattan skyline. His friend asked him what he was thinking about, and without hesitation Art, now with the glimpse of a brighter future ahead, said, 'See all those windows up there with all those lights going on in them? Well, back of every one of those there's somebody. And one of these days every one of those people up there behind every one of those windows – is going to know my name.' Although Nolan does not share the source of this possibly apocryphal anecdote, it is a most evocative image of the contagion of fame at the dawn of the mass media age.

As the decade advanced, Shaw set about finding his place in the sun, forming his own band and gaining notoriety on and off the bandstand. When he hired lead trumpet player Zeke Zarchy in 1936 he confided to him that he was sure that they would play for Crosby as he was about to start hosting the Kraft Music Hall. Shaw was upset when he learned that Jimmy Dorsey actually got the plum assignment. "Shaw would later blame Crosby's mixed signals on an unwillingness to say no, a wish to get along: 'To be a good guy: hail – fellow well met....Bing needed to be liked by people....'Swhy he died on a golf course.'" It would seem, just maybe, the irascible – and possibly presumptuous – Shaw had only himself to blame. Nolan quotes Zarchy. "Zeke had no beef with Art. But when Crosby didn't come through, and ...hotels canceled bookings...Shaw's trumpeter gave notice. 'I told Artie, like the guy said to the horse when the horse farted, I can't live on promises.' "

Martin McQuade

3. Star: How Warren Beatty Seduced America

By Peter Biskind, published by Simon and Schuster in January at $30 ($16.50 Amazon), hardcover, 627 pages, ISBN-10: 0743246586, ISBN-13: 978-0743246583.

Star tells the tumultuous saga of Warren Beatty, whose heightened aesthetics compelled him to berate poor Joan Collins upon learning that she had committed to co-star with Crosby and Bob Hope in *The Road to Hong Kong*. "Beatty threw the script on the floor. 'It's crap,' he said. 'Crap! Why do you need to do it?'"

The ever sensible bombshell replied, it is hoped with her trademark *sang-froid*, "Two reasons. For the money – and to get away from you." Thus the two vagabonds yet again lured a lovely from the oppressions of a sly lothario.

Mr. Beatty was hoisted on his own petard many years later when he would travel to *Ishtar* with Dustin Hoffman. They secured Elaine May to write scenes. Biskind tells us, "The idea was to riff on the string of Bob Hope and Bing Crosby *Road* movies that were big in the forties." Hoffman protested the idea, to no avail. Voilà a notorious Hollywood debacle, or perhaps I should say, a prime example of that aforementioned expletive.

Martin McQuade

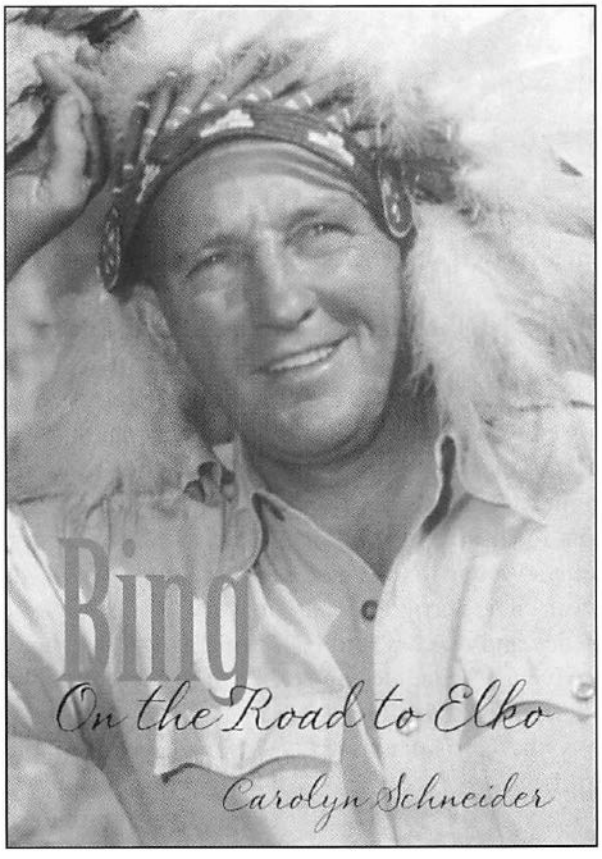
Bing News from Carolyn in Las Vegas, Nevada

Bing's niece, Carolyn Schneider, has news.

Interest in the life and times of Bing Crosby goes on, like the constant beat of a Van Heusen tune. Since I submitted my last report card here, I have had the opportunity to meet even more fans, hear more stories, and receive more news clippings about Uncle Bing. The people who come to my presentations and book signings never fail to tell me of the love and respect for the world's greatest entertainer. We all know how long Uncle Bing has been gone, yet I can assure you that those who attend my appearances are men and women who play his music, request his films and want to keep his memory alive.

My book continues to receive some very nice publicity, not only because it carries the name Bing Crosby but also due to the Nevada locale. I have had the pleasure of appearing for several speaking engagements and book signings.

After the Book Fair in February, I was a guest speaker at the Rotary Club in March. Also that month, my guest spot on PBS alongside *The Legendary Bing Crosby* screening proved to be successful for all parties. The TV station allowed me to promote my book and they received a very good response.



Following that experience was a book signing at the Sundance Bookstore in Reno. Quite a few people came to buy the book and tell me of their memories of Uncle Bing. Borders bookstore was my next stop, followed by an evening at our main library. Originally planned as "Meet the Author" with three speakers, it was changed to a Special Event, all about Bing Crosby and featuring me and my book. A showing of *Here Comes the Groom* was included, all with good attendance.

A telephone interview with the Reno Gazette Journal produced a large and well written book review. A "live" radio interview on station KLAV, again promoted my book and I was more than pleased to tell of my memories of Uncle Bing.

May 17th brought the recital and competition for the Bing Crosby Music Scholarship at the Nevada School of the Arts. Four high school students received the well deserved awards.

I was very surprised to learn that our PBS station was planning to run "The Legendary Bing Crosby" again in June. Not only *that,* but I was invited to co-host the program. This is quite an honor. The program went very well. Although I had no script to follow, I found it relatively easy to simply chat about Uncle Bing and his music. PBS reports that the show was again very successful.

Carolyn (left) at work on the show as seen on the TV screen.

I am booked into the Nevada State Museum in Carson City, for a speaking engagement on the relationship of Bing Crosby to the history of Nevada, followed by a recorded interview on radio station KUNR in Reno, the next day. The host of the program is planning to devote his full hour on the air to playing Bing's recordings and his interview with me. This is an excellent venue and I am very grateful to Mr. Bob Carroll. The program has a very wide broadcast audience and reaches into California as well as Nevada.

My busy schedule enables me to keep reminding the public that Uncle Bing was a man for all seasons, not simply the Christmas holiday. I hope my efforts prove fruitful.

Carolyn Schneider

(Editor: Wow! Carolyn is certainly getting some publicity through her efforts. As we were finishing this issue off, we read that Carolyn was a guest on WDUQ-FM's (90.5) "Rhythm Sweet and Hot" on Saturday, June 19. Hosted by Mike Plaskett, Carolyn spoke about Bing and she also talked about another musical uncle—orchestra leader Bob Crosby. "Rhythm Sweet and Hot" features music from the 1920s, '30s and '40s. It airs Saturdays from 7 to 10 p.m.

Incidentally, if you haven't already got it, her book can be obtained direct from Carolyn at 9811 W. Charleston Blvd. #2-185, Las Vegas, Nevada 89117 (phone: 702-240-8570 or email: artist71635@msn.com). Due to a special arrangement with the publisher Carolyn requests that you order the book directly from her. Carolyn will gladly autograph and inscribe the book to all purchasers. UK, EU and Ireland members should order through Michael Crampton.)

Bing's comeback

Your Editor had his office refurbished not too long ago. This involved moving all my assorted junk out and then putting it back in. I moved many old Crosby magazines and I could not resist the urge to browse through one or two. One that fell open was BINGANG of December 1974. At that time the President and Editor was Patricia Sullivan and the Vice-President and Treasurer was Priscilla Koernig. Sadly Pat passed away in 1999 but Priscilla remains an active Crosby fan. The two ladies had attended the taping of Bing's television special in August 1974 and this was hugely significant as it heralded Bing's return to show business after his serious operation earlier in the year. But let's allow Pat and Priscilla to tell you about it.

"BING CROSBY AND HIS FRIENDS"

A behind-the-scenes report by Pat Sullivan

"Bing Crosby and His Friends" was the name of the telecast aired on CBS on Oct. 9 which marked Bing's first performance since his serious lung surgery. The rehearsals, pre-taping sessions and studio show took place on Aug. 10-11 at the Palace Theatre in Hollywood. Thanks to Larry Crosby, who graciously invited us, Priscilla and I were there for the entire event—a total of some 15 hours of LIVE Crosby. Except for two one-half hour lunch breaks, Bing was there continuously either performing, rehearsing, watching the other performers, or sitting in the audience chatting with crew and cronies. This was, in short, a fan's dream come true—a high point in my personal Crosby memory book.

When Bing strolled out on stage to record his first number, a great new song about growing old with lyrics tailored especially for him, it was a nervous moment for everyone. *(Editor: The song was "No Time at All")* First

of all, having heard some disturbing rumors about continued ill health, we were concerned over how he would look. Secondly, we were concerned over how he would sound only 8 months after removal of 2-thirds of his lung. The answers came immediately and decisively—Bing couldn't possibly have looked or sounded more super. It was one of those moments of genuine joy, and I recall that I couldn't stop smiling or nudging Priscilla to exclaim again and again—'he looks wonderful!' Bing has gained weight and is heavier than he photographs and, as always, the richness and deepness of the in-person voice is startling. Later in the show Pearl Bailey summed it all up in her inimitable way with quip, "Bing baby, I swear they didn't take something out of you in that hospital, they put something in!"

Many times Bing was draped over a seat in the aisle directly across from us exchanging stories with the producer and crew, and it was almost like seeing a caricature—that's how true to form he was. He was dressed in the most God-awful pair of plaid pants with colors of blue, red, purple, yellow and you name it; green socks; and a golf cap which he removed occasionally to scratch his head—no toupee. He seemed genuinely happy—whistled, danced, broke into song compulsively, and was literally convulsed with laughter several times in antics with Hope.

During rehearsals, Bing is loose, spontaneous, and funnier than Hope. In front of a live audience, it's the reverse. Bing tightens up and follows the script, Bob is all charged up and the ad libs just flow forth. It's a shame that so much of the fun and spirit of the rehearsals is lost in the TV version. You can appreciate the fun Bob had singing "Moonlight becomes you, it goes with your hair, you certainly know the right things to wear" to toupee-less Bing in his plaid pants versus the TV version sung to Bing clad in tuxedo and toupee.

After seeing the show on TV, I had even more disturbing feelings about this matter. I think it was Groucho Marx who recently lamented the passing of the live performance, and I have to add my own small voice to that lament. Perfection was obviously the goal—over 15 hours of rehearsals and pre-tapings to produce a 1 hour telecast! The cost of perfection, however, seems to be the removal of genuine humor. Humor comes essentially from spontaneous quips and muffs—all lavishly present at the pre-taping but "perfected" out of the final production. This trend already dominates our entertainment media so thoroughly that it takes an experience such as we had to recall that radio and early TV was not like that. I think it is a serious loss.

The new songs (recorded effortlessly, by the way in 2 or 3 run-throughs) were the solo, "No Time at All," a number with Pearl and Sandy called "Delivery," and the opening and closing theme, "Feels Good." The philosophy in Bing's solo is: "Maybe—if I refuse to grow old, I can stay young till I die." Some of the lyrics are:

"When your best years are yester
the rest are twice as dear"
and
"I've had the troubles and fears of seventy years
But the only thing I'd trade them for
is seventy more"

Bing had a great deal of trouble getting started in the right key for "Blue of the Night" in the medley number during the live taping and had to be coached from the sidelines. It was frustrating for him because he had reservations on the 9:40 final flight to San Francisco.

Bob quipped, "Can you imagine having to stop a show in order to teach him that song—I just can't believe it." Bing received a long standing ovation at the end, and he did miss the plane.

Pat Sullivan with Bing at the taping of the show.

Larry Crosby had invited us as his guests and he really meant it. He came down to the theatre on Sunday to take us to dinner but when it was obvious that the show would run very late, we changed the plans for a late arrival at his house instead.

Larry is very quiet—the antithesis of Bing in every way. Still not fully recovered from the aftermath of a bout with pneumonia which he suffered about a year ago, the past few years have also brought the death of his wife, their brother Ted, and very recently, their sister Catherine. His house is in the Trousdale Estates area of Beverly Hills. Larry showed us his Rogues Gallery of family pictures on the wall and fixed breakfast for us on Monday morning before we left for the airport. He had had a houseful of guests all week (a niece and her 6 children) who had been sleeping all over the house in sleeping bags through Saturday and for whom Larry was chief cook. Larry still goes to the office every day, does all his own cooking ("Such as it is," he said) and has no servants other than a maid who comes in to clean. Larry reaffirmed our tremendous store of affection for the entire Crosby family, and we pray for his complete

return to strength and health. It was an unreal weekend which flashed by all too quickly but which will never be forgotten.

Thanks, Larry. Thanks, Bing.

Pat Sullivan

REPORT FROM THE WEST COAST
by Priscilla Koernig

August was quite an exciting month for Pat and me. I'll try not to repeat what Pat has already said. The two weeks before the rehearsal were just as exciting. It's a lot of fun to plan a trip like that. I talked to Larry Crosby a number of times over the phone. He's so nice. I don't know what we'd do without him at the Crosby Office. The taping was postponed a week because Bob Hope had other commitments. Larry invited Pat and me to stay at his house on Sunday night. He had a house full Saturday night, otherwise he would have us then too. He has a lovely home in the Trousdale Estates of Beverly Hills. That is a beautiful area. He moved there a couple years ago when his wife, Elaine, was unable to get up and down the stairs in their previous 5-bedroom home. Larry lives there by himself and does his own cooking. He made us a delicious breakfast Monday morning.

I managed to get on the same flight in San Francisco that Pat was on from Sacramento to Los Angeles. We arrived in Hollywood around 11:00 and our rented car was waiting for us. We drove to Sunset & Vine, parked and walked across the street to the Hollywood Palace Theatre. Leo Lynn was our host. They were all out to lunch when we arrived, but the guard at the door had our names. We went out and had some lunch ourselves and came back to the theatre around 1:00. We sat in the second row. We were only there a few minutes and there was Bing walking across the stage. Well, like Pat already has said, he looks just tremendous. And when he smiled and danced and whistled between takes, it was like the years had been erased.

We were there until almost 9:00 P.M. when they dismissed Bing and Sandy Duncan was to do her number then. No reflections on Sandy as she's a very talented girl, but we left—and you know why! We hadn't had dinner and Pat wanted to take me out for my birthday which was August 8. We found a delicious Italian restaurant in Los Angeles. After dinner, we went to our hotel and went to the top floor to enjoy the view and reminisce about our day. The next day, since we had until 1:00 P.M., we drove around L.A. and vicinity.

We were at the studio Sunday from 1:00 P.M. until 9:45 P.M. During this time, thanks to Leo, we met a very nice lady, Nancy Nelson. That was the first time she had met Bing, although she's been grateful to him since a child (Nancy's story of this long admiration is this journal). I told Nancy I'd be happy to take her picture with Bing. She was thrilled. She is almost blind because of some doctor's carelessness, but she can see a little if up real close. She phoned me recently to give me her new address and to tell me that through the Braille Institute, she has a job with an auto club.

Sunday at the rehearsal, Bing was busy running backstage to check the Dodgers baseball game and the Masters golf tournament. He kept us posted on the score. I'm a San Francisco Giants fan myself! During the medley of Bing's hits, Sandy was trying to be very dramatic while singing "You're clear out of this world when I'm looking at you." Bing stood there with a grin on his race and it broke Sandy up. She told him to get serious. After this happened a couple of times, the director said something to Sandy. She said, "Will you tell Bing to stop standing there grinning! This is my dramatic number and he's standing there grinning!" At one point the director noticed Bing's socks—"Bing, are you wearing green socks?" he said to Bing, who was all dressed up in a tuxedo. "Well, I don't know I guess they're green!" said colorblind Bing. Director—"Oh no! "****". Bing continued, "Well, anything is permissable these days—anyway, I'm not doing the show for my socks!"

Sandy Duncan sings as Bing watches

I agree with Pat. The finished show went too fast—and it lost a lot that we saw. Wish every one of you could have been in Hollywood with us on August 10 and 11. By the way, when I got back to work Monday, my boss told me that I should have stayed out the whole day. If we'd had more time there, Larry would have shown us around...

Priscilla Koernig

(Editor: Bing subsequently wrote to Pat Sullivan on September 12, 1974 as follows.)

Dear Patricia:

I was very happy to see you and Priscilla at the pre-

taping sessions and the studio show of the television Special done last month.

I thought it turned out rather well. The material was very good. The writers, particularly Ken and Mitzi Welch, are very clever.

I don't know of any plans to record any of the numbers, Patricia. There might be, after the thing has been on the air and somebody has heard the songs. They might think about it. Or I might even explore the possibility with some of the recording companies in Los Angeles.

You know, of course, that both Larry and I are grateful for all the things you've done for us in connection with the publication of the semi-annual journal, and I appreciate that it is indeed a chore that involves a great deal of work, and time, and effort.

I've been talking about recording plans with two or three different people. An outfit in England. Sonny Burke of Daybreak Records to do an album of some of the old Southern songs, and there's also a discussion about doing some of the Broadway show tunes that haven't been kicked around too much. Things by Rodgers and Hart, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Vincent Youmans, George Gershwin, Cole Porter and some of the other great writers. We'll see if anything develops. I hope so.

I like to get something out every year, and I should get going soon if I'm going to meet this schedule.

Very best wishes to you and all the members

Most sincerely yours,

Bing

(Editor: The TV show was televised on October 9, 1974 and the critics liked it.

> Bing Crosby, resurfacing after a serious illness earlier this year, was in fine and typical fettle on "Bing Crosby & His Friends" special on CBS-TV. Shot with a mixture of informality and proscenium stage glitter at the Hollywood Palace, the show got good mileage out of old friends Bob Hope and Pearl Bailey and new friends Sandy Duncan and writers Ken & Mitzie Welch.
>
> The Welches, whose specialty is special musical material, including collages of myriad song hits into a cohesive capsulized whole, contributed most of the material that gave the special a workable format - and the performers responded winningly, within that basic framework. Crosby opened with 'Feels Good, Feels Right', setting the show's mood, and from there on in, the headliners moved freely in and out of camera range with natural ease.
>
> Highspots were a self-descriptive 'Delivery.' with Crosby, Bailey and Duncan explaining their styles musically, a well-staged song-and-dance audition sequence by Duncan, and Bailey's reprise of her big band singing days with terps as well as vocal on 'After You've Gone'. Hope and Crosby did their usual friendly insult patter, and all the stars combined for a medley of Crosby song hits, packaged in fragmentary form by the resourceful Welches. The hour evolved into effortless entertainment as well as a showmanly reminder or Crosby's class throughout his career.
>
> (*Variety*, October 16)

Pearl Bailey explains something to Bob as Bing watches.

Bing can still handle a tune and comedy

Bing Crosby is a better singer at 70 than a lot of men are in their 30s. That was proven without a question on Wednesday night when Bing presented the first of his specials for this season. He looked fit; he performed with the same ease that we have known of him for the past umpteen years, and more important he handled his singing chores with the same ease that he did in his long list of motion pictures.

Somebody, in watching the show, commented that Bing doesn't realize his age. That's probably just as well for he goes along as if he were 20 years younger.

If there were any weak spots in his show it was Sandy Duncan's attempt to vocalize. She's a very good dancer, and has a most expressive face, but when it comes to vocalizing she has a long way to go.

Bob Hope arrived on the scene bright and early in the show, having been introduced by Bing as the "Henry Kissinger of Toluca Lake." He and Bing always have fun.

Pearl Bailey, who just last week stood in front of some 42,000 people at the Oakland Coliseum and sang the 'Star Spangled Banner' without any accompaniment, showed up also and although she was only on hand a short time, managed to show the old Bailey professionalism.

Seeing Bing on television is quite a treat. He has limited his appearances and as a result he becomes must viewing when he decides to appear. Of course, he, Kathryn and the kids are seen frequently on television doing their orange juice commercials, usually right from the Crosby backyard, but he doesn't often give us a treat like he did Wednesday night.

It has been suggested by a number of people that Bing ought to do a solo show. And stand up there and sing all the old and new goodies he does so well. We'd agree, it would be one of the musical events of the decade. You'd never think that Bing was a hospital patient less than a year ago. He looks fit. This is probably due to those five-mile walks he takes over the golf course near Chapalita in Guadalajara, Mexico.

(Bob Foster, *San Mateo Times*, October 10)

And as we know, Bing really began to get back into show business in a big way and gave us three great years. He did his 1974 Christmas show, made an album of southern songs with Paul Smith and then started to record for "an outfit in England" as he described it. These recordings were made in February 1975 at Chappells in New Bond Street in London. Arrangements were made for some ICC members to attend on the last day of recording and BING magazine #37 published in March 1975 described what happened. Editor John Bassett gave an overview and then Secretary Reg Bristo went into the detail as follows.

Bing In Bond Street

. . . Here was a smallish listening-room, equipped with enormous speakers and with plate-glass down one side instead of a wall: as Ken Barnes opened the door there was a flood of high-powered music – with the majestic, so familiar, voice of Bing, so dominant, sounding every bit as great as Ken had assured that it was, with Bing so completely recovered from his severe illness.

And as we heard the voice – we saw the man! There was Bing, seen through the plate-glass! Bing singing, in person, at last! At a music-stand, but holding the music in his hands, spread out with that inevitable peaked cap, a cardigan, and a loose-at-the-neck shirt....Bing himself!

Bing was two yards to the right of the musical director – Pete Moore, of course – casting a seemingly casual yet knowing and penetrating glance at him every so often... musicians in incredible "disarray", all fitted with headphones, were at work with the seeming complete ease of the top professionals. By "disarray" I mean the musicians seemed to be in no coherent pattern as far as brass, reed, strings, piano, harp etc were concerned! The floor was a mass of cables, microphones were everywhere – and yet everyone, especially Bing and Pete, gave the impression everything was fine, everything was going well, everything was going to plan.

We entered when they were running through the number "Yours Sincerely"...in other words, it wasn't a recording "take" for Pete Moore was still modifying his arrangement of the song – all arrangements, incidentally, were hand-written specifically for each instrument.

And we had some glorious examples, before our very eyes, of the famous ad libbing of which Bing is such a master....

"What happened to the orchestra?" he asked as they came to a thin passage and it seemed the band was deserting Bing!

"That's a *** note!" complained Bing on another occasion.

Then Bing stood patiently, quizzically, looking from Pete to the musicians while a little discussion went on between them as to how to iron out this *** note.

"But Derek will be playing D sharp while I'm playing D natural."

"No, no," says Pete, "You come in when Derek has finished – more an overtone...." Everybody nodded as if to say: That's it.

"Ready now are we?" gently says Bing.

"Okay Bing, says Pete, "will you take it again from the first eight?"

"Sure," says Bing, "Ready when you are... we double up on tempo then...right...good! All clear."

Artists of the highest calibre making difficult work look easy: I'm sure Ken was delighted in the control-room as we all were in the listening room.

Ken Barnes (left) with Bing and Pete Moore.

Because everyone wore headphones they were all in ready, conversational contact with each other, and while Pete discussed points with the strings, say, the rest of the musicians went on playing their own phrases as if

making use of the time to perfect things.

I personally could have watched this "rehearsing" all day, but in a surprisingly short time – not more than half-an-hour – all was ready for a pukka "take". This was signalled by an extremely loud bang from the loud-speakers – loud enough indeed, to make one jump from one's chair!

Pete Moore held up his hand and got dead silence for about 10 seconds, then gently brought the music to life...a short intro from the orchestra, Bing stretched his neck upwards...glanced at Pete, an almost indiscernible nod from Pete to Bing...and in came Bing, majestic, resonant, full, rich-voiced...and straight through to the end. No interruptions, no breaks for discussion...a complete and perfect "take".

So absorbing had been the spectacle, that I'd barely noticed the other occupants of the listening-room, but with the "take" safely made, we had time to greet Bob Roberts, our "Guinness Book of Records" collector, Frank Murphy our former Secretary, inevitably the incredible Leslie Gaylor (I think he must have spent the entire time of Bing's visit in London!), Eric Crowder, down from Nottingham post-haste, John Ewens from Essex, and Phil Clarke, up from Southampton. And a tight-fit we were in that listening room. As I explained, recording studios are purely functional!

After this full "take", the musicians seemed to be taking a break...and we saw Bing arrange his scores on his stand...and then he began to wend his way through the cables, microphones, instruments and other paraphernalia in our direction...

Then he was standing in the doorway:

"Hullo you folks. Nice of you to come and see me...good to see you..."

I must confess it was rather an overwhelming moment for me. Bing standing there, after all these years, so pleasant looking, so at-ease, so casual (sartorially and otherwise!)... In those few fleeting seconds before I stepped forward to shake his hand and bring him the greetings of all ICC members, I found myself thinking, in truly a flash, of all those songs, all those films, Bob Hope, the Andrews Sisters, and goodness knows what else! An incredible experience. What did I say? I cannot be sure but I think I said something to the effect that it was impossible to be original, I knew he had heard it a million times, but...it was a tremendous thrill and pleasure to meet him, shake his hand.

"You're very kind," said Bing. Just like that. We shook hands, firmly, warmly.

Then the spell broke: "May we have some pictures Bing?"

"Sure," said Bing and soon he was turning this way and that in response to "Bing – this way please!" Soon he was signing albums, photographs, plaques, drawings...chatting easily to Bob, Frank, Les, and the rest of us. Someone presented him with a very artistic plaque – "Perhaps, you'll send it to me?" said Bing, no doubt wondering how he could look after it and preserve it.

Reg Bristo (left) and Les Gaylor (by the fire exit) watch Bing autograph an item for John Ewens

This must have gone on for thirty or forty minutes, then Bing looked up after signing the last autograph: "Any more?" Everyone appeared satisfied at last. I found this significant because of an incident that happened later.

Ken Barnes came in much later, when Bing had gone, and asked for Bob Roberts, Leslie Gaylor, John Bassett and myself to join him in the control-room where he wanted some shots of us with Bing in that sanctum. Making our way through the aforementioned paraphernalia of the studio, we found Bing had been collared by a professional photographer for some publicity shots.

Bing stood there, patiently, while I swear this photographer took a hundred shots. The flash was popping incessantly...this went on for a good ten minutes, while the four of us stood waiting in the background. At last the photographer signified he'd finished. "Thank you Mr. Crosby."

Bing turned and walked out...he had gone to the control room as we discovered when we entered with Ken.

"I thought we'd have a few shots in here, Bing, with some of your greatest fans," said Ken.

Bing stood up, shook his head: "Been enough shots for one day, Ken" and walked out. And I didn't blame him! Bing had patiently stood and submitted to pictures

from us, to signing autographs, until everyone was satisfied. "Any more?" Bing had asked. And that was his portion of time. Perhaps because he has found it necessary; perhaps on medical orders, I don't know but it seems to me Bing sensibly apportions what he has to do and does it in rotation, patiently, calmly, cheerfully. And when he has done it, HE HAS DONE IT! And eminently sensible, eminently reasonable, I feel. His days would be impossible, I fancy, if it were otherwise.

For instance, when Bing finally left us – he went straight to a working lunch in the restaurant upstairs. A private restaurant, that is, belonging to the studios, where Bing was to be interviewed – and photographed – for a Sunday Times Colour Supplement. And then he was roped in for the Pete Murray radio show. This gives an idea of just what a hectic time Bing would always have, especially in London and why, in my estimation, he sensibly schedules his day.

Needless for me to say, in view of the foregoing, that it was a truly momentous day. To meet Bing and to have the added privilege of seeing and hearing him "at work" was the fulfillment of 40 years unswerving admiration. I am extremely grateful to Ken Barnes for the opportunity afforded.

Reg Bristo

(Editor: Good old Reg! He could certainly convey his enthusiasm in print. And the British reviewers liked the album too.)

Bing Crosby—That's What Life Is All About—United Artists UAG 29730—Producer: Ken Barnes.

Pleasantly packaged, this album is perfection from start to finish. Backed by press and TV coverage, including Michael Parkinson, it is bound to sell in large quantities. It is also supported by the title track released as a single, already climbing the charts. "Best Things in Life Are Free" is a well-loved standard, and it's good to see the Hoyt Axton composition "Have a Nice Day" also included. Johnny Mercer joins forces with Crosby for two of the tracks, being the first time they have recorded together for thirty years. A superb album which is bound to be one of the year's best-sellers.

(*Music Week*, September 6, 1975)

...Crosby's voice has lost very little power and presence despite his septuagenarian status and the major lung operation he underwent last year, and, estimably aided by the outstanding arrangements of Pete Moore and the first-class orchestra directed by Moore, this album is another landmark in a uniquely long and distinguished career.

(*The Gramophone*, November, 1975)

Celluloid Crosby

"The Guinness Book of Movie Facts and Feats" is a spinoff from the annual "Guinness Book of Records". For Crosby enthusiasts it promises an opportunity to examine Bing's film career achievements in greater depth than the coverage offered in their "Book of Records". That promise is hardly fulfilled. There are five Crosby entries. They are, in summary:

- Bing's earnings from films in 1946 ($325,000)
- the seven films in which Bing played himself
- his frequent top placing in the annual Quigley Publications poll as a box-office draw
- how he acquired his name
- the banning of *Going My Way* in Latin American countries because the sweatshirt Bing wore was thought inappropriate attire for a priest.

All fairly run-of-the-mill facts and feats. Intriguing as general information for a film fan but hardly likely to surprise any reader of this magazine .

The most overlooked film career achievement of Bing Crosby took place on June 15th, 1960. He was before the cameras for three different film appearances. He completed his participation in them during that one day. I know of no other actor able to include that in his or her c.v. On that summer Wednesday in 1960 he finished work on *High Time*. The film had been in production at 20th Century-Fox since February. Filming was delayed by an actors' strike which explains the lengthy shooting schedule. When the last shots were in the can for *High Time* Bing visited an adjoining sound stage at Fox for his contribution to *Let's Make Love*. He then travelled to Columbia Pictures studio to film a sequence for *Pepe*.

Looking at the films individually, *High Time* came off worse critically. The magazine "Harvard Lampoon" included it in a list of the ten worse films of 1960. The film critic of the "New York Times" explained why:

> "The screenplay by Tom and Frank Waldman...is awfully sad, awfully burdened with hackneyed situations. And Mr. Crosby, alas, is no kid. He tries to be boyish to prove modestly that he's in the groove ... but there is a terrible gauntness and look of exhaustion about Mr. Crosby when the camera gets close and peers at his face."

I believe that the film failed because it had no target audience. Tuesday Weld and Fabian were the love interest for the younger set whilst Bing and Nicole Maurey were cast in the hope of pulling in more mature cinemagoers. The generation gap was too wide if Fox

were looking to sell *High Time* as a film for all the family. Furthermore, Bing should have enquired why the film, originally called *Daddy-O*, was rejected by Spencer Tracy. That might have warned him off or maybe the prospect of its conversion to a musical with songs by Sammy Cahn and James Van Heusen gave Bing the impression that a silk purse could result. As it happened, Bing only sang one Cahn-Van Heusen composition during the film's 103 minutes running time. Admittedly it was a good song. "The Second Time Around" went on to be nominated for an Academy Award. Jane Morgan sang it at the Oscar ceremony where it was beaten by "Never on Sunday". Nowadays "The Second Time Around" is commonly regarded as being part of the vocal legacy of Frank Sinatra.

On to *Let's Make Love.* Filming should have wrapped earlier but for the actors' strike. The cameo appearance by Bing saw him acting as vocal coach to Yves Montand. The plot called for Montand to be given expert help in singing, dancing and telling a joke. There is a belief that the actors' strike resulted in the recasting of the three professional showbusiness personalities hired to tutor Montand. Some sources state that Jack Benny was to provide Montand with tips on comedy technique, Fred Astaire was to show him how to dance with style and Frank Sinatra was to teach him how to sing a ballad. Supposedly the filming delays caused by the actors' strike prevented that trio from filming as planned.

Cantinflas and Bing rehearse for their scene together.

I don't accept this for two reasons. First of all, the commitment to film for one day could have been squeezed into even the busiest schedule. Secondly, Bing was contracted to the film before it went before the cameras. He had negotiated for his fee of $10,000 to be donated to Gonzaga University. As far as I know, the only significant casting change was that of the film's leading man. Gregory Peck was originally signed to play Marilyn Monroe's love interest. It was not the actors' strike that affected Peck's appearance. He objected to certain script re-writes. When the part was recast, Yves Montand took on the task of Marilyn's leading man both on screen and off. The film itself was less of a clinker than *High Time.* That was partly because it was an update of a previous 20th Century-Fox success, *On the Avenue,* made in 1937. The plot had been tested on that occasion when it was used as a musical vehicle for Dick Powell.

Meanwhile, back to Bing's busy day. He left the Fox lot and travelled to Columbia Pictures studio to contribute three vocal snatches to be used in *Pepe.* He sings "Pennies from Heaven", "Let's Fall in Love" and "South of the Border" to Pepe at the Columbia Studio gate. Pepe wants an autograph and Bing obligingly signs the man's tortilla. Columbia Pictures has high hopes for this one. Pepe was played by Cantinflas (real name Mafia Moreno) who was Mexico's highest paid and most popular entertainer. Columbia's publicity department trumpeted it as "The most fabulous fun show ever on the screen! So hilarious! So heartwarming! You'll glow all over!"

The original theatrical release had a running time of three and one quarter hours which prompted critic Leslie Halliwell to write: "Feeble and seemingly endless extravaganza in which the boring stretches far outnumber the rest." The version I saw when the film played Southport had fewer boring stretches due to editing prior to a limited release. It was cut even further for a north of England television screening by Granada around Christmas 1970 when its running time including commercials was two hours. Of the three films to which

Bing contributed on June 15th, 1960, *Pepe* was the least successful both critically and from the point of view of turning a profit for the production studio. The film hadn't been available for decades until it popped up on TCM in the States some months ago. I would now like to revisit it if only to hear the vocal contributions of several gone-but-not-forgotten showbusiness giants. All that remains to jog the memory is the soundtrack album featuring the contributions of Bing, Maurice Chevalier, Bobby Darin, Sammy Davis Jr,, Judy Garland and others. That album was deleted in the mid 1960s.

I'll briefly return to *Let's Make Love.* Mr. Crosby did not appear on screen with Miss Monroe in that film. We need to go back to 1954 see them together. They had a night out to the pictures in December of that year. The occasion was the screening of the 20th Century-fox film *There's No Business Like Show Business.* The film was about to receive its premiere and selected guests were invited to a private screening at the Fox studio.

From the photographic evidence on page 25 you can spot Marilyn on the far left three rows from the back of the screening room. Bing is far right on the second from front row. Why bother with a hairpiece when the room will shortly be in darkness? Mona Freeman was Bing's female companion. They are obviously conversing. Perhaps Bing is saying: "You know, that Monroe girl will make it big one day and we'll appear in the same movie."

Keith Parkinson

THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES

WELCOME STRANGER Film. This Paramount picture was filmed during the spring of 1946 and received its premiere the following summer. The director was Elliot Nugent who was an actor in the silent era. To prove he could still emote, he cast himself as a doctor in the film. He had a scene where he was called upon to examine Barry Fitzgerald and he used Billy Wilder to direct him in that brief sequence. The film paired Crosby and Fitzgerald for the second time, no doubt in the hope that audiences would support it as well as they had the 1944 *Going my Way.* That must be the reason it generated rentals in excess of $6 million in North America, because it fell short of the standard of the earlier film in both story and song content. Bing approved Joan Caulfield as his leading lady and the second female lead, Wanda Hendrix, seemed destined for a successful career in films. Unfortunately things did not pan out for her. It was only her third film part, having recently been signed by Paramount. Her 1949 marriage to Audie Murphy blighted her career. Thereafter she appeared in the sort of action film in which Murphy excelled but which made little use of acting talent. When I looked up the reviews garnered by *Welcome Stranger* I was pleased to see the critics were fairly satisfied with a routine Crosby picture. The 'Radio Times Film and Video Guide' said, "all very welcome entertainment, with the male stars bringing a little edge to the easy-going, sometimes soppy proceedings," 'Speed's Film Review', published shortly after the film was released, stated, "Pleasing, warm-hearted, sentimental little comedy with Bing Crosby acting with all his usual easy charm." And those two reviews are indicators as to why the film disappoints me. The references to "easy-going" and "easy charm" show Bing coasting along instead of adding something extra to the proceedings. However the pre-sold popularity of the Bing-Barry team worked for the accountants. *Welcome Stranger* ranked 7th in *Variety's* list of box-office champions of 1947.

WELCOME TO MY DREAM Song. Dorothy Lamour is serenaded by Bing with "Welcome to My Dream" in the film *Road to Utopia* (1946). Whilst Bing gives his all vocally Dottie takes the opportunity to steal half of a map identifying a gold mine. The song is the sort of romantic ballad that Burke and Van Heusen could write to order for Crosby pictures.

WELD, TUESDAY [Susan Ker Weld] (1943-) Actress. Sexy young thing who never seemed to realise her potential as she entered middle age. She was 16 when she was cast as Joy Elder in *High Time* (1960). Third billed as the girlfriend of the character played by Fabian, the two were intended to appeal to teenage ticket buyers who couldn't quite relate to the film's Crosby-Maurey romance. By then Tuesday Weld had been in films for two years, her best role to date being in *The Five Pennies* (1959). Some good starring parts followed including *The Cincinnati Kid* (1965), *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* (1977) - for which she received an Academy Award nomination - and *Who'll Stop the Rain* (1978). She was married to Dudley Moore from 1975 to 1980 and following her divorce she never managed to re-establish her prominence as a versatile and capable actress.

WELL, DID YOU EVAH! Song. It was one of several musical highlights in *High Society* (1956). Crosby and Sinatra sang the Cole Porter composition when both acted slightly inebriated. The song was given a looser interpretation than was the case when it was first performed in the 1939 Broadway hit "Du Barry was a Lady". Porter amended the lyrics for *High Society* by removing out of date references and providing light banter between the two vocalists (e.g. " you are called the forgotten man"). When I bought the Capitol 78 release I was disappointed to find that the end of the song had been removed to fit the limited running time of the shellac single.

WE'LL MAKE HAY WHILE THE SUN SHINES Song. Arthur Freed and Nacio Herb Brown

Joan Caulfield and Bing get to know each other in *Welcome Stranger*.

wrote it for *Going Hollywood* (1933) and it featured, appropriately enough, in a sequence taking place on a Hollywood soundstage. Bing and Marion Davies sang it on film and Bing made a studio recording for Columbia whilst the film was still in the editing stage.

WE'RE BUSY DOIN' NOTHING Song. If there were music videos in 1949 this Johnny Burke-James Van Heusen composition from *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* would provide a good example of how sound and vision could complement each other. Bing, Sir Cedric Hardwicke and William Bendix perform the song as they journey to "meet the people." Decca Records are to be congratulated in assembling their top singer and the two actors for a studio recording of the song.

Keith Parkinson

THE QUIGLEY POLL

Keith mentioned the Quigley Poll which has been conducted each year since 1932 and is an annual survey of motion picture theatre owners and film buyers. They are asked to vote for the ten stars that they believe generated the most box-office revenue for their theatres during the year. It has been long regarded as one of the most reliable indicators of a star's real box-office draw because the selections are done by people whose livelihood depends on choosing the films that will bring audiences to their theatres. The Quigley Poll appears annually in Quigley Publishing Company's International Motion Picture Almanac (formerly *The Motion Picture Herald*) and at:

www.quigleypublishing.com.

The results of the latest poll were released earlier this year and have now been combined with the results for

the last 78 years. This is what the table shows now.

Top Ten Money Making Stars - of the past 78 years.

Position		Years on List
1	John Wayne	25
2	Clint Eastwood	21
3	Tom Cruise	20
4	Gary Cooper	18
5	Clark Gable	16
6	Bing Crosby	15
7	Paul Newman	14
8	Mel Gibson (tie)	13
	Bob Hope (tie)	13
	Jerry Lewis (tie)	13
	Tom Hanks	13

All Time Number One Stars

Position		Years #1
1	Tom Cruise	7
2	Bing Crosby (tie)	5
3	Burt Reynolds (tie)	5
4	Clint Eastwood (tie)	5
5	Tom Hanks (tie)	5
6	Doris Day (tie)	4
	John Wayne (tie)	4
	Shirley Temple (tie)	4
	Mickey Rooney (tie)	3
	Robert Redford (tie)	3

Not One to Rest on His Laurels

Martin McQuade continues the theme as he tells us about the Laurel Awards.

Bing Crosby: Movie Star. This was a job at which he triumphed. And how! As previously outlined, Crosby's dominion is well documented by his rankings in the annual top ten poll conducted by The Motion Picture Herald, the film industry bible which was published by Quigley Publications. After placing respectably during the years 1934 (number seven), 1937 (number four), 1940 (number seven) and 1943 (number four), he reached the number one position in 1944; a summit which he maintained until 1948 (a five year streak unrivaled until 1982). In 1949 Crosby toppled to number two, due to the ascendency of none other than Bob Hope. The poll continued to reflect Crosby's enormous appeal, assigning him to number three in 1950, number five in 1951, bouncing him back to number four in 1952, then down to number five in 1953, and, finally, bottoming him out at number eight in 1954. All told, a most graceful fifteen-year arc.

What was Crosby's box office clout in the years following his absence from the Motion Picture Herald Magazine's top ten? There is no official tracking until the inception of the Laurel Awards, created by the rival trade magazine The Motion Picture Exhibitor. These were bestowed from 1958 to 1968, then 1970 and 1971. They were determined by American and Canadian film buyers. In addition to accolades given to movies and performers within various categories and genres, there were two annual postings of the top fifteen male and female star attractions. This afforded a farther-ranging gauge of each year's major ticket sellers. After the vote, which until 1970 occurred in the fall, the results were published in the magazine, without ceremony, and reflected excellence for the previous year's crop. (These are not to be confused with the Golden Laurel Awards which have been bestowed since 1990 by the Producers Guild of America)

The 1958 Laurel Awards top male star poll ranked Crosby at **number ten**, as a result of *Man on Fire* and lingering bookings of *High Society*. (Inger Stevens, who made her film debut in *Man on Fire*, was a runner-up for top new female personality.)

The 1959 poll showed that Crosby dropped two notches to **number twelve**, an impressive feat when one considers that he had no feature film released during the previous year. Perhaps some routine reissue of one or more of his classics accounted for the placement. Incidentally, Gary Crosby was nominated for top new male personality of 1958.

Bing looks rather fed-up as he has his earring adjusted for a scene in drag in *High Time*.

The 1960 Laurel Awards named Frank Sinatra the winner in the category of top male musical for his performance in *Can-Can*. Crosby came in third in the voting for his portrayal of Father Conroy in *Say One for Me*. (Debbie Reynolds was nominated for top female musical performer for the same film.) On the strength of the ticket sales of *Say One for Me*, Crosby maintained his **number twelve** position in the top male star poll.

The Laurel Awards for 1961 named *Pepe*, in which Crosby has a cameo role (which Keith Parkinson has

discussed on an earlier page), as the top musical, and *High Time* garnered fifth place in this field. Crosby placed **number fifteen** in the listing of top male stars. This would be Crosby's final appearance in this poll. By these cumulative rankings, he proved to be the most enduring of Golden Age movie stars, outlasting all of his pantheon contemporaries from the early thirties to still sustain a top box office rating as the sixties began. Complete listings of the Laurel Awards poll of the top fifteen male stars for the years 1957 through 1960 follows this article.

Longevity – and continued popularity – kept Crosby in demand for a slew of projects throughout the decade: *The Jimmy Durante Story, The Brothers Grimm, How the West Was Won, Tender is the Night, Advise and Consent, The Art of Llewellyn Jones, By the Beautiful Sea, The Devil's Advocate, All the Way Home, Choice of Violence, Popi, Say it With Music, Bloomer Girl, Absence of a Cello, Rocket to the Moon, Mad Dogs and Englishmen, The Great St. Bernard, The Detective, The Road to India, The Road to Christmas, Paint Your Wagon, Spofford, The Bride Wore Blinkers,* and *The One and Only Genuine, Original Family Band.*

Crosby would either resist the blandishments of the zealous producers of these tantalizing projects, health problems would interfere, or plans would just fall through. Alas, following *High Time*, he would essay roles in just three more theatrical films: *The Road to Hong Kong, Robin and the Seven Hoods* (which received two Laurel Awards nominations for best musical and best song, "My Kind of Town,") and the remake of *Stagecoach.*

Although he was never one to rest on his Laurels, Crosby was the recipient in September 1962 of the first honorary one to ever be granted. This occurred just as *The Road to Hong Kong* was in general distribution. This citation echoed the sentiments of generations of grateful movie fans. **"This Golden Laurel is awarded to Bing Crosby, whose outstanding talents through the years have brought entertainment to family audiences the world over, as well as prestige and credit to the motion picture industry."**

Laurel Awards Top Male Stars

1957	1958
Rock Hudson	Rock Hudson
Marlon Brando	Marlon Brando
Frank Sinatra	Frank Sinatra
William Holden	Cary Grant
James Stewart	William Holden
Gary Cooper	James Stewart
John Wayne	Gary Cooper
Burt Lancaster	John Wayne
Jerry Lewis	Glenn Ford
Bing Crosby	Jerry Lewis
Cary Grant	Pat Boone
Glenn Ford	**Bing Crosby**
Bob Hope	Bob Hope
Jeff Chandler	Dean Martin
Randolph Scott	Jeff Chandler

1959	1960
Rock Hudson	Burt Lancaster
Cary Grant	Rock Hudson
Frank Sinatra	Jack Lemmon
James Stewart	Tony Curtis
John Wayne	William Holden
Tony Curtis	Cary Grant
William Holden	Kirk Douglas
Jerry Lewis	John Wayne
Dean Martin	Glenn Ford
Jack Lemmon	Yul Brynner
Kirk Douglas	James Stewart
Bing Crosby	Marlon Brando
Gregory Peck	Frank Sinatra
Richard Widmark	Jerry Lewis
Robert Mitchum	**Bing Crosby**

Martin McQuade

Bing on the Southbank

The BFI (British Film Institute) promotes understanding and appreciation of Britain's rich film and television heritage and culture. Established in 1933, the BFI runs a range of activities and services and the BFI Southbank (previously the National Film Theatre) screens over 1,000 films a year, from rare silent comedies to cult movies and archive television screenings. The venue hosts previews and gala screenings as well as events and on-stage interviews with film-makers, actors, producers, critics and writers.

John Benstead of Rotherhithe in London drew our attention to a Grace Kelly Season from June 2 -29 at the BFI Southbank. The publicity stated:

> *From High Noon to High Society and beyond. Her film career lasted barely five years, but Grace Kelly's iconic status was cemented forever by a handful of captivating performances and a royal wedding. We explore the actress behind the fairytale and Hollywood's most immaculate chignon.*

In all eight films were shown with Bing being featured in:

The Country Girl June 15, 19 & 24
High Society June 9, 11, 25 & 28

Jeremy Rose was one of our members who went to see *The Country Girl.* He writes, "I'd never seen it on the big screen, and indeed hadn't seen it at all for quite some time. I know I'm biased, but I honestly thought Bing was the best thing in it. I know Grace Kelly picked up the Oscar, but, speaking personally, I would much rather have seen Bing win the Oscar for that

performance rather than *Going My Way.*"

The BFI issued some notes to those attending and here's an extract from what they said about *The Country Girl.*

> ...Rarely had she ever played a part that entirely broke through the Grace Kelly mask and certainly never on the screen. In that sense *Country Girl* was a first and a last. In order to do it, Grace had to call on all the technique which school and the theatre had given her. If it is apparent that she is 'acting,' it is equally certain she is acting well. Her characterisation is thus more impressive than poignant. By comparison, Bing Crosby's performance (in a far less sympathetic and attractive role) is more natural and convincing.

The notes also included the *Variety* review of December 1, 1954 which included this.

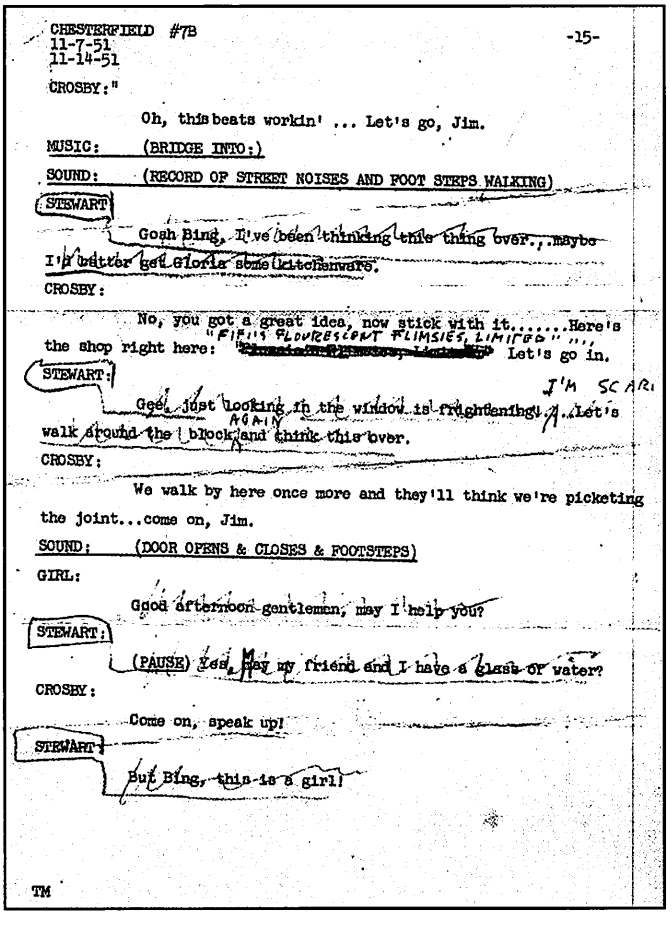
> ...Crosby pulls a masterly switch, for it is the character of the story that he projects: it is not the crooner in another shallow disguise. He immerses himself into the part with full effect, inspiring audience revulsion with his deceit and sottiness and yet engendering just enough sympathy to make his final triumph over the bottle a welcome development.

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue

Dave Richards, Hot Springs, Arkansas, USA

I'm enclosing copies of some pages from the script of Bing's Chesterfield show on November 14, 1951. The guests were Jimmy Stewart and Anna Maria Alberghetti.



CHESTERFIELD #78 -15-
11-7-51
11-14-51

CROSBY:"

Oh, this beats workin' ... Let's go, Jim.

MUSIC: (BRIDGE INTO:)

SOUND: (RECORD OF STREET NOISES AND FOOT STEPS WALKING)

STEWART

Gosh Bing, I've been thinking this thing over...maybe I'd better get Gloria some kitchenware.

CROSBY:

No, you got a great idea, now stick with it.....Here's the shop right here: "FIFI'S FLOURESCENT FLIMSIES, LIMITED" Let's go in.

STEWART:

Gee, just looking in the window is frightening! I'M SCARED AGAIN...Let's walk around the block and think this over.

CROSBY:

We walk by here once more and they'll think we're picketing the joint...come on, Jim.

SOUND: (DOOR OPENS & CLOSES & FOOTSTEPS)

GIRL:

Good afternoon gentlemen, may I help you?

STEWART:

(PAUSE) Yes, May my friend and I have a glass of water?

CROSBY:

Come on, speak up!

STEWART

But Bing, this is a girl!

TM

One of the pages from the Chesterfield script

I was an 18 year old Marine stationed at Camp Pendleton, Oceanside, California. I was a big Bing Crosby fan and bought lots of his records since I was 14. I wrote for and received a ticket to the show.

I hitchhiked to Hollywood, got there early and got a front row seat. Bing ambled out on the stage and since he wasn't wearing a toupee, I didn't recognize him till he started singing. He was his usually casual, charming self.

During the commercials, I noticed Bing writing and making changes in the script. While he was chatting with Jimmy Stewart, when they completed a page, they would drop it on the stage floor. Bing introduced the song "When the World Was Young." When the show ended, I reached up and grabbed a handful of the script they had just read.

I had less than $5 to my name. I bought a hamburger and slept in a car on a used car lot. The next morning, I hitchhiked back to the base.

Many years later, I located an audio tape of the only time I ever saw Bing. As I play it, I can read along on the actual script they used.

Thank you for keeping Bing's memory alive.

Keith Parkinson, St. Helens, UK

BING154 was another first class edition. Hereafter it should be referred to as "the good news issue". Praise was rightly heaped on the Mosaic box and the news about the Collectors' Choice CDs and DVDs gave us all reason to rejoice. Those CC releases plus Stan Walker's revelation about an unissued take of "Ol' Man River" make it difficult to foresee the day when anyone can rightly describe himself as a Crosby completist.

Ken Crossland's review of the "Voices" CD mentions the first digital release of "Seven Nights a Week". This (justifiably) neglected rock 'n' roll number probably received its first airplay on BBC national radio on March 29th when Clare Teal included it in her Radio2 show. Her excuse was that Nelson Riddle was involved.

Scanning the list of still to be released CBS radio songs I noticed Bing's duet with Lindsay of "Rock Around the Clock". If this title ever surfaces it may replace "Seven Nights" as my least enjoyable Bing vocal.

We went to Liverpool Philharmonic Hall last week to see Debbie Reynolds. The format was songs, film clips and reminiscences. I had hopes of a mention of *Say One For Me* but the only reference to Bing was a film still from the film projected prior to the concert commencing.

The 5th volume of "Through the Years" arrived yesterday. The sound quality is much improved over the early "Chronological Bing Crosby" issues although this may be down to the source material as much as the remastering. But it's a pleasure to listen to the French songs again because my battered 10" album has been gathering dust in the loft for decades rather than risk playing it and having to replace a stylus.

Ken Barnes, by email from Essex, UK.

Just received the latest BING and couldn't put it down. It's a knockout from cover to cover.

Graham Pascoe, Bathurst, NSW, Australia

Congratulations to all contributors and the editors for a great BING for Spring 2010. Re 'The A-Z of Bing's movies', I'd be pleased if the series was repeated. Some readers will have missed the early episodes and perhaps there'd be additional material for inclusion sometimes.

The review of the Hopalong Cassidy book by Martin McQuade reminded me that in 1938 Hopalong Cassidy was reported to be one of the three top box office attractions in family theatres in Australia. The others were Disney cartoons and *The March of Time* shorts. William Boyd's visit to Australia in 1954 drew tremendous crowds.

By chance I happened to see (on DVD, for the first time) this month *Reaching for the Moon* and *Confessions of a Co-Ed*. I thought Douglas Fairbanks was miscast in the former (he had a silly grin on his face in most scenes) and all of the actors in the latter.

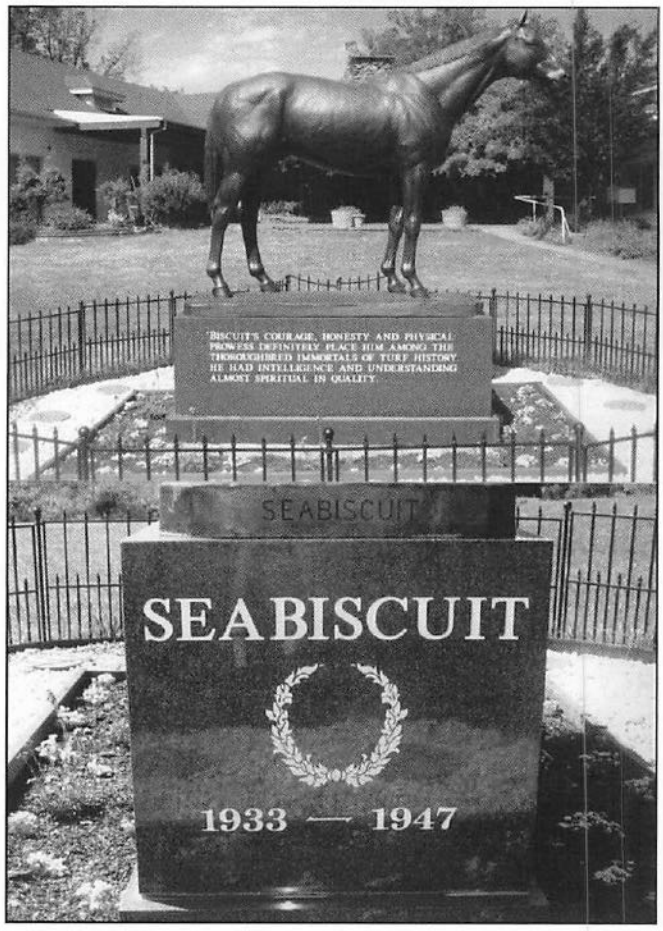
Last week I watched on DVD a 2008 episode of *The Invisibles* starring Warren Clarke, of *Dalziel and Pascoe* fame (no relation), as Syd Wooley. I nearly fell off my chair when a scene showed him bare-topped after a big night with a tattoo of Bing in the middle of his back. His mate exclaimed, 'Bing Crosby! What were you drinking? Floor cleaner or something?'

Alice Kane, Marengo, Illinois, USA - by email

My own Mosaic set arrived last week. I have finally listened to all seven discs. The sound is wonderful! So clear and free of surface noise. It's like Bing and Buddy and friends are right here in the room with me! Sure enough, I've never heard most of these songs before now. I love them all, but there are a few very special favorites. I highly recommend this set to all Bing Fans. I have no regrets about spending this amount of money on this set. Actually, Amazon is asking a LOT more money than the Mosaic Company is! I bought it directly from Mosaic. I've actually been listening to this wonderful collection ever since it arrived!

Scott Hughes, Paradise, CA, USA

Here are some pictures taken last weekend during a tour of the racing horse Seabiscuit's home and final resting place Ridgewood Ranch. It's located in a small, old-fashioned Redwood Tree logging town, up the Hwy 101, along the north coast, which nowadays has fallen on hard times, called Willits. I've been wanting to see the place ever since I read that book *Seabiscuit* by Laura Hillenbrand, that was so popular about a decade ago ... and learned that Bing and his family often were guests at Ridgewood. Bing's mansion in Hillsborough was purchased from Seabiscuit's owner Charles Howard. Crosby fans wouldn't have been disappointed with the 2 hour tour, 'cause the docent recounted several anecdotes involving Bing & family including showing the marble headstone that marked the grave of Wee Biscuit (a Scottish Terrier given to Mrs. Howard by Dixie Lee), the tiles from the Crosby's guestroom the had specially made musical note symbols embossed on them, the antique radio/record player in the living room on which are placed a photograph of a 1930's Bing Crosby standing outside a horse's stable as well as a 78rpm record of Bing's songs from *Going My Way*, and the swimming pool where Bing s first family swam along with other stars and racing fans from that era like Shirley Temple, John Wayne, Carol Lombard and Clark Gable.



Michael Tyce, Oxford, UK

Delivering stuff to the local charity shop last week I came across a pile of just arrived 78s amongst which were a number of Bing Crosbys, mostly on Columbia (Light and Dark Blue) but also Decca and Brunswick labels, with, to my surprise, many known Brunswicks on Columbia. On closer inspection, the whole lot were made in India, where perhaps Columbia still held trademark rights long after Bing had left them. Some notable pairings are "Young and Healthy" R12888 as DB30054 on Columbia with "Lazy Day" JC8596 DB30054. ("Young and Healthy" had been in my father's collection but on Brunswick and paired I think with "Japanese Sandman" (without vocal)). Also on Columbia, "Cabin in the Cotton" 8635 with "A Ghost of a Chance" 2474 , "Thanks" LA1 with "Temptation" LA69; and "Be Honest with Me" DLA 2401 with "Goodbye Little Darlin Goodbye" DLA 2402. Two red Deccas with "Sunday Monday or Always" backed with "If You Please" and "Vict'ry Polka" with "Pistol Packin' Mama". 15 in all, full details on request at tycehouse@camcott.co.uk.

Not only this treasure trove, which I snapped up, but the man looking through them with me had been a member of the Squadronaires in 1940. We exchanged happy memories of Workers Playtime!

(Editor: What a find! Makes looking in charity shops well worthwhile. Trouble is a lot of the shops throw 78s away without displaying them. Michael was a very lucky man.)

The "Longines" sides

Some of the most neglected tracks of Bing's are the "Longines" sides. I suspect that some might feel that the neglect is justifiable. I have to accept that some tracks do not stand up to further listening, and I would not for a moment claim that any rank as neglected masterpieces. The set emanates from a relatively fallow period in Bing's output. The first batch were recorded in 1965, with only one other title recorded that year, and the next in 1968, with only six other rather unmemorable tracks recorded between the two groups, plus the album "Thoroughly Modern Bing", memorable my mind for being quite the worst of anything Bing ever did.

Please bear in mind that I am judging the set by the highest standards – set by Bing himself. From a lesser artist they might well be regarded by some as masterpieces.

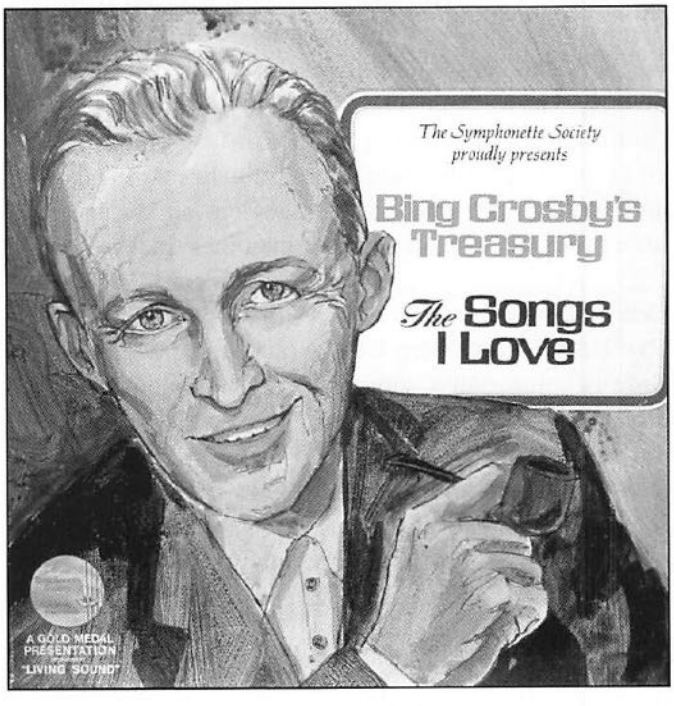
So far as I am aware the set has had no official release on CD but was contained on a limited collector's issue of two CDs "Lillis, Love and a Little Covered Wagon" which included Bing's tracks from "How The West Was Won".

The story of these tracks is interesting. Sometime in 1966 a series of advertisements started appearing in various magazines and newspapers in the UK (and I assume, in the US and elsewhere also). I no longer have a copy of any of these, but they were placed by the Longines Symphonette Society and offered a set of six LPs plus a "free souvenir" LP. The recording had, according to the adverts, been directed by Mishel Piastro - "The dean of American conductors, famed violin virtuoso – "etc. The six LPs were said to contain 84 tracks and were entitled "Bing Crosby's Treasury – The Songs I Love". The "free LP" was "Bing Crosby's All Time Hit Parade" of 12 tracks. So 96 recordings of Bing's, yes? No.

After the appropriate remittance was sent off, the package received and the first LP placed on my turntable the enormity of my misunderstanding (or mis-reading of the advertisements?) hit me. Was I plain naïve? (Or had I and many others been deceived?). What I in fact had was a set of six LPs with one track of Bing's on each side, and the "free" LP with four more tracks of Bing's, producing a total of sixteen tracks actually recorded by Bing. The entire remainder consisted of purely orchestral tracks. The whole lot was in a stout box. Was Bing a knowing and willing party to this? Possibly others might be able to add additional background. Maybe, just maybe, had I been a member of the ICC at the time, I might have been more aware of what to expect. My reaction was of profound disappointment. The orchestral tracks were passable but there was nothing to make them stand out from dozens of other "lounge music" albums. I was not about to play through six items of music in the Melachrino manner for each

Crosby track so the whole lot got neglected and eventually disposed of.

Move on a couple of years and a further series of similar advertisements appeared. They were of course totally ignored by me. It was only much later that I discovered that twenty tracks of Bing's had been added to the total package, and that the "free" LP had been totally recast. Many years later I acquired this second issue. The six LPs now had 6 titles on each side, three of Bing and three orchestral, arranged alternately. The "free" LP had some genuine oldies from Bing's past. The packaging was near identical, the most noticeable difference being the rear sleeve of the "free" LP which now had a listing of the tracks with a prominent heading "Original " and "All Time Hit Parade" instead of much publicity material about the quality of Longines "Living Sound" recordings. I cannot at this space of time remember whether there was any booklet included in the original set, but the second hand set of the later issue that I obtained had none, and I have never seen one. The LPs themselves are merely housed in paper inners inside a stout board box on which the titles are printed on a fold out flap. The "free" LP alone has a sleeve.



The 1968 issue

In fact, as I subsequently learned, the original orchestral tracks had been recorded in England by an orchestra conducted by Geoff Love, with arrangements by him. Geoff Love revealed this years later in a TV interview. He was a well known conductor leading orchestras on TV variety shows and accompanying a number of leading vocalists in the recording studios. Amongst these were Connie Francis, Russ Conway, Paul Robeson, Judy Garland, Frankie Vaughan, and Johnny Mathis to name but a few. He also issued many orchestral recordings under a pseudonym "Manuel and His Music Of The Mountains". His work is accomplished but does not have the strongly individual stamp of a Riddle or May. He died in 1991.

Mishel Piastro was, it seems, the musical director of the Longines company, and I get the impression from other publicity material for the company that he was credited for musical direction of their releases despite the apparent fact that he employed "jobbing musicians" to actually do the work.

Bing recorded vocal overdubs for the original 16 tracks during the course of November and December 1965 in San Francisco.

I do not know what prompted the release of the additional tracks. These were overdubbed by Bing during the course of March 1968, again in San Francisco. I have seen it stated that the 1968 overdubbing was done over the original orchestral tracks. Logic suggests that this would be very difficult to achieve in a sensible way, because the main melody line – the "vocal line" if you like – would have been carried by the orchestra, whereas an arrangement for an accompaniment is "around" the main melody line. I have listened closely to the few remaining orchestral tracks available to me (on the original "free" LP, which I retain), of the titles Bing recorded in the second group of sessions, and whilst there are distinct similarities there are also some very obvious differences. If they are indeed the same orchestral tracks, I can only suggest that they were on a multi-track tape, of at least three tracks, with possibly the centre track carrying the stronger element of the melodic line, which could thus be removed to be replaced by Bing's voice. I have not the remotest idea whether this theory stands up to scrutiny, but would draw attention to the fact that the tracks have a remarkably emphasised left – right stereo effect. It would be interesting to have comment from more informed sources than I.

Bing said in his later years, and on several occasions, that he preferred recording with an orchestra around him. I don't know when he came to this view, but presume that it must have been somewhat late, as he overdubbed his voice onto pre-recorded orchestral tracks on a number of occasions. On the evidence of these tracks I can understand why he reached his view, as I sense a degree of tentativeness and carefulness and lack of spontaneity in Bing's approach. I entirely realise that this is a view formed with the benefit of hindsight, so could be suspect. Despite this there are a number of tracks that are enjoyable and worth a place in any collection. The audio quality is good, well up to the best standards of the 1960s without going to the extremes of the specialist "ultra-fi" labels of the time.

So what are the individual tracks like? My observations are not those of a knowledgeable musician. I merely "know what I like" without being able to analyse the finer points of how the musicians achieve the effects they do.

I give a brief view on each, in the order in which they appeared on the second LP package. As with any comment on the quality of a song or performance of it I fully expect others to have different views. My views are not intended to offend! My intention is mainly to prompt interest in this set.

The majority of the tracks follow the form of a full chorus from Bing, an orchestral interlude, and half chorus, though there are one or two with merely a chorus, and at least one with two full choruses from Bing with an orchestral interlude. I identify whether each track was on the original package or added to the later issue.

Record 1 side 1

That Old Gang Of Mine (additional March 1968). A gently melodic and only slightly nostalgic approach here. Bing sings "gee but I'd give the world to see that old gang of mine" but he really means it would be quite nice to see them, without giving up too much. The evocation of nostalgia without truly deep feelings.

Marie (additional March 1968) Opening with a strong rhythmic swing band introduction, we have a nice bouncy, swinging number which finds Bing very relaxed and in his element. Brass played in unison is prominent and this with the strong rhythmic support prompts memories of the famous Dorsey hit (at least for this listener). Bing is perhaps very slightly overshadowed by the band but overall I believe this to be one of the more successful tracks.

One For My Baby (additional March 1968) Bing essays a weary careworn approach, not as successfully in my view as either Sinatra or Astaire, but it still comes off well and the orchestra manages a few bluesy effects produced by muted brass. Bing's had a few – enough to be a little maudlin but not yet slurring in his speech. Some "bar" effects are produced as of dropping coins with a lightly tinkling piano. Bing manages to put in some asides which strengthen the feeling – a weary "I'll pick up the tab in the morning" for example. Again well worth a listen.

Record 1 side 2

River, Stay Away From My Door (additional March 1968) So the river is rising and Bing is threatened with a flood. What does he do? He has a relaxed if slightly swinging conversation with it. He sounds unconcerned and is more in the mood for gentle pleading, as if he can reach a mutually agreed compromise. Nonetheless the rhythmic swinging approach mixed with some relaxed conversational singing works quite well if you can divorce yourself from the meaning of the words.

What'll I Do (additional March 1968) A gently nostalgic questioning from Bing – "When I'm alone with only dreams of you, what'll I do?" – a chorus from Bing, a pleasant chorus from the orchestra, and half chorus from Bing ending with the plaintive "what'll I do? One of the more satisfying slow numbers in the set.

When My Sugar Walks Down The Street (original 1965) (on original "free "LP). Bing is on the street corner proudly watching his sugar walking down the street and boasting to the other lads how the other birdies go tweet tweet tweet (though I'm not sure why they should do that), and how when he's kissed he sure stays kissed. Two full choruses from Bing with a full chorus from the orchestra separating them. A bold, declaratory song with appropriate brassy support. I would add this to my list to keep.

Record 2 side 1

Ballin' The Jack (additional March 1968). A strong band backing with strong Dixieland influences and a vigorous contribution by Bing. A very short track of just 2 minutes.

Ole Buttermilk Sky (original 1965) In my view the outstanding track. The orchestral support is well judged and just suited to Bing's treatment which continues in a flowing confident but relaxed manner throughout for a full 3 minutes and forty seconds. There is no straining for effect – it all seems to come naturally.

The Song Is Ended (additional March 1968) A distant thump on a drum and a Mantovani-ish string and brass intro leads to Bing's reminisces – a gentle regretful view of things past, even though the melody lingers on, as confirmed by strong string dominated interruptions. Once or twice Bing sounds a little hesitant, possibly deliberately. The musical arrangement strikes me as a little more varied than many of the other tracks.

Record 2 side 2

I've Heard That Song Before (additional March 1968) Bing is comfortable with this and sings along with the orchestra in a nice swinging arrangement. He catches the mood of a vaguely remembered song to perfection.

Remember (additional March 1968). To my mind the orchestra here gets the right feel, and Bing puts some feeling into it though at one point he seems to be straining a bit when he should perhaps be a little more relaxed and introspective.

I'll Take Romance (original 1965) A strong waltz tune. Bing's whirling around the dance floor with his partner's skirts whirling round him. Bing's treatment and the orchestral arrangement complement each other well.

Record 3 side 1

Puttin' On The Ritz (additional March 1968) Bing gets in two full choruses on this one. It opens with a strong flourish from the orchestra, Bing coming in with a strongly rhythmic bass guitar. The swing band type accompaniment keeps things moving at a good pace with Bing in very fine form.

Always (original 1965) Bing sings of ever lasting devotion with a sincere if rather mournful mien. The lyrical arrangement augments the vocal line well and

leaves a satisfying impression.

Thank You For A Lovely Evening (additional March 1968) Bing sounds very grateful and whilst the orchestra has some variation the song does not flow well. In part this arises from the use of a number of "jerky" words ("absolutely" for example, used twice, breaks up what should be a flowing line). There is a lengthy orchestral interlude with strings predominating which is more successful. I get the impression the song might have been written for a female voice. The writers were Dorothy Fields and Jimmy McHugh, but it is not one of their more memorable numbers.

Record 3 side 2

Love Makes The World Go Round (additional March 1968) A nice melodically flowing arrangement with full chorus from Bing. Orchestral chorus, final chorus from Bing. The music effectively gives the impression of "La Ronde" – swirling in circles.

All Alone (original 1965) (on original "free "LP) At the opening Bing sounds a little shaky, but things improve, if not to the point of being wholly memorable

Coquette (original 1965) (on original "free "LP) Opening a brass flourish Bing challenges little Coquette to tell him why she keeps fooling, making fun of ones who love her. His approach doesn't really sound very reproachful, taking the words as they come, until the final declaration of " - you know, little Coquette, I Love you" which is a firm declaration.

Record 4 side 1

Sentimental Gentleman From Georgia (additional March 1968). The band produces a vigorous upbeat backing with considerable variation but I get the impression that Bing had problems fitting his contribution around the pre recorded orchestra and the song does not flow as well as it should. This is the sort of thing where Bing should be in his element. He is not here.

Lonesome and Sorry (original 1965) (on original "free "LP) Opening with a flourish on the strings, Bing does sound lonesome and sorry – a quiet pleading voice, but perhaps the strings are a bit too sweeping and positive. Some nice orchestral effects on plucked strings. A bit too much self pity here to enjoy it, but I suppose in the right mood - - - .

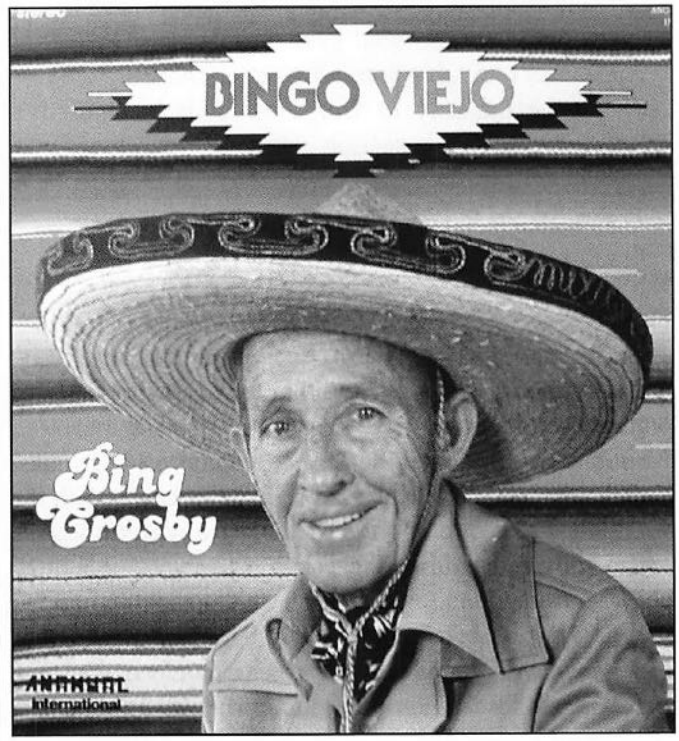
There's Danger In Your Eyes, Cherie (additional March 1968) Bing seems to coast through this one, and does not appear to be able to find too much enthusiasm or insert any vocal shading to express the concern that the words invite. There are some nice instrumental touches – a guitar and harp being prominent, but this is not one of the better numbers.

Record 4 side 2

Say It Isn't So (additional March 1968) Bing takes this in a low conversational tone, well supported by the orchestra, and with the right feeling of reluctant acceptance implied by the words. I feel that the sweeping strings are a little excessive part way through the second half chorus.

Tenderly (original 1965) A slow waltz that does not come off. This is one of the tracks that illustrate how uncomfortable I believe Bing was with a pre recorded accompaniments – he does not seem to sort out the rhythm, is tentative and appears to pause inappropriately.

South Of The Border (original 1965) The introduction is a solo guitar followed by strings and castanets in an attempt to set the scene, but it is not totally convincing. Bing displays a "frog " in his throat on a couple of occasions and one wonders why there was not a retake. Nonetheless, once one ignores the attempts to set a Mexican scene, the song is pleasant enough, with Bing in goodish if not outstanding voice.



Record 5 side 1

Say Si Si (additional March 1968) Quite a few changes from the lyrics included with the version recorded with Rosie Clooney in 1958. The orchestra's strong Latin-American rhythmic accompaniment is effective and Bing gets into the mood.

Friendly Persuasion (additional March 1968) Nice sweeping strings introduce Bing who in some ways is at his best, getting down into deep baritone territory and sounding pretty sincere with "thee I love". Orchestra and voice very nicely matched with the orchestra taking a short chorus with emphasis on upper strings. One of the better tracks

Amapola (original 1965) Effective Latin American treatment from the orchestra with Bing in good

confident style. He's clearly comfortable in this, relaxed and in good voice. One of the better tracks (and I prefer it to the 1975 version on the "Bingo Viejo" album).

Record 5 side 2

I Hear Music (additional March 1968) The orchestra opens with strong and portentous flourish which is at variance with the subject and Bing's treatment. It is clearly light - "take me out of bed and sing this song" – and Bing treats it that way at a gentle bouncing happy pace whilst the orchestra is in a tub thumping declaratory mood.

In The Chapel In The Moonlight (original 1965) A clanging chapel bell introduces a very short orchestral introduction. A song of memory with and allusions about everlasting memories – "till the roses turn to ashes til the organ turns to rust —- til the moonlight turns to dust". Bing gets the mood spot on, well supported by a varied orchestral backing which ends with another clang on the chapel bell.

Stormy Weather (original 1965) While Bing strives for a blues effect, this is contrary to the orchestral backing, because the majority of Bing's vocal is backed by a Mantovani-ish string section which is straight lounge orchestra with just a few attempts at a bluesy riff. The overall effect is not very satisfying.

Record 6 side 1

How Can You Do Me Like You Do (additional March 1968) A rather meaningless, banal and repetitive lyric with rather raucous orchestra. Among the tracks which I would gladly ditch.

My Prayer (original 1965) Not one of the more satisfying tracks. Bing's treatment is at variance with the words. He seems to be in contemplative regretful mood for what might have been but the lyrics relate to continuation of what is. The orchestra is more attuned to the meaning of the lyrics.

Rock a Bye Your Baby With A Dixie Melody (original 1965) Bing takes this as a gentle lullaby to a gentle swinging rhythm. The orchestra has much subdued brass flourishes with occasional sweeping strings, ending on a fairly triumphant – "with a Dixie Melody." Among the better tracks.

Record 6 side 2

Dance With A Dolly (additional March 1968) A rather repetitive chorus vigorously performed by Bing with lots of blasts from the brass, trombones being prominent. Not for repeated listening.

Isn't This A Lovely Day To Be Caught In The Rain (original 1965) Both Bing and Orchestra take this in a gentle way. I find difficulty in disassociating the song from Fred Astaire, but once wrenched away from such memories this is a pleasant if not very memorable performance.

The Breeze And I (original 1965) The orchestra evokes a Spanish feel, and Bing sings along pleasantly enough to the fine melody, his rich voice coming through nicely here without producing any very strongly memorable result. At least it is better than the version Bing recorded for "Bingo Viejo" in 1975.

I wish I knew the true history of the relationship with Longines. Why did Bing get involved with the issue, which so obviously was using his name to sell a much larger package of orchestral tracks? What was the motivation for the later issue? Was it supposed to make amends in some way – but if so I certainly was unaware of any special offer to original purchasers, so it was not a very effective way of doing so.

My concluding impression is "If only" – If only Bing and orchestra had been in the studio together – If only they had found a common approach, If only Bing did not have to strive so much to fit his performance around the pre – recorded orchestra, If only he had involved himself a little more in some of the tracks, too many of which are lacklustre.

As it is there are a number of tracks here, interspersed with the failures, that are worth reviving, and I would not like them to be forgotten to the degree that they have been to date. This is far from being the best sequence of records in Bing's recording career, but it is also quite far removed from being the worst, and although there are some titles that should not have been approved for release by Bing, there are a number that I think deserve a rehearing.

If I were responsible for issuing a single CD of the better tracks I would choose:

Marie,
One for My Baby,
What'll I Do,
When My Sugar Walks Down the Street,
Ballin' the Jack,
Ole Buttermilk Sky,
I've Heard That Song Before,
Puttin' on the Ritz,
Always,
Love Makes the World Go Round,
Say Si Si,
Friendly Persuasion,
Amapola,
In the Chapel in the Moonlight,
Rock a Bye Your Baby with a Dixie Melody,
Isn't This a Lovely Day to Be Caught in the Rain,
The Breeze and I

With, possibly, 'South of the Border', 'Lonesome and Sorry' and 'The Song Is Ended', as makeweights. The others do not make the break.

J. Richard Baker

(Editor: Thanks, Richard for an excellent in-depth review. I suppose that we are all so much more

knowledgeable and sophisticated now 40 years on. I bought the later set including all 36 of Bing's tracks and was delighted with it at the time. Mind you, it was not so easy to listen to various tracks then as it is now on CD or iPod when we can just flick from track to track. The first edition of Ralph Harding's Crosby Collector magazine in 1966 quoted from the USA publicity.

> *"A comprehensive newly recorded 6 record set – packaged in our distinctive full color library presentation case – featuring more than 80 wonderful, nostalgic memory songs reflectively gathered by Bing Crosby from the warm years when melody was king! And Mr. Crosby has just recorded for this Treasury those 12 songs that have earned a special place in his heart."*
>
> *"Send no money now - Free 10-day trial"*

£7. 19. 6d was the final cost which was very competitive at the time. Ralph gave it an enthusiastic review even though he admitted that he had not listened to all the tracks when he wrote his article! He was the archetypical collector of course and I know that there are others in the ICC who have purchased Crosby items which are still in their cellophane wrappings after several years. Les Gaylor was also pleased with the set saying, "For me, the orchestral backing is the best that Bing has ever had." With hindsight we can be a little more discerning but overall, I still enjoy the set and often play the Bing tracks.)

Kraft Music Hall and other radio shows

Thane Cooper of Tasmania in Australia is working on a project to document all surviving songs and programs from the Kraft Music Hall radio program. He has Lionel Pairpoint's book and he knows about the Rice tapes and that Gonzaga have many discs from the shows. However he has also written to the University of Wyoming about the Kraft Music Hall material they hold in their John Scott Trotter collection and this is the email response he received.

Subject: John Scott Trotter Collection information

Thank you for contacting the American Heritage Center, the archive of the University of Wyoming, with regards to the John Scott Trotter Collection. In attempt to offer specific information about the audio recordings related to Bing Crosby and the Kraft Music Hall, I offer the following information:

As you noticed from the inventory, boxes 451-457 contain records. I estimate there are about 400 records (most appear to be double-sided.) I have attached two copies of random record labels for you to view *(Editor; One is reproduced below, the other lists two songs from July 7, 1938 – "Pocketful of Dreams" and "Laugh and Call It Love").* As you can see, the labels list the song and date of program. I did listen to several records to get a feel for the content. It appears they have a short introduction (i.e. Welcome to Kraft Music Hall, the next song you will hear is...) Then the song is played. So they are not the entire programs, but just select songs from a given program. The lengths of the records are on the order of 3 to 6 minutes.

Boxes 446 and 447 contain reel-to-reel audiotapes and a few audiocassette tapes. I estimate there are about 100 reel-to-reel tapes. I am including a copy of one of the boxes *(Editor: this lists 4 shows – November 30, 1949, December 7 and 28, 1949 and October 11, 1950)* that gives the program information. As you can see, it gives the date of the program. In listening to some random programs, I gather some may be large portions of programs, and others are just pieces of select music. It is difficult for me to say exactly what is and is not contained on any given program.

Due to staff limits, we unfortunately do not have the staff to list every single title for you (my guess is there are nearly 2000 individual songs and/or programs. As well, we don't have the necessary staff to listen to each program to give you more specific information. Options are as follows: 1) you could place a small order of random programs to get a feel for the contents 2) you could visit us in person to look at each record and tape listing, and you could listen to select portions of some programs. 3) You could hire a proxy researcher to do this for you.

There is no cost to visit the archive and look at and listen to these programs. So feel free to visit us if you wish. The cost to duplicate material is $25 per hour. Let me know how you would like to proceed.

Sincerely,

John R. Waggener
Associate Archivist
American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming
1000 E. University Avenue, Dept. 3924
Laramie, WY 82071
307-766-2563
waggener@uwyo.edu

Well, I am sure that Thane would love to visit Wyoming but it's a long way from Australia. Do we have any members in the Wyoming area who might like to get involved? I am sure that Thane would be interested to hear from any members who are able to contribute to the Kraft project and he can be reached by email at thanecooper@yahoo.com.au

BING ON THE BOX

Malcolm Macfarlane surveys the TV and radio scene of the last four months.

TV highlights

USA & Canada

The Legendary Bing Crosby
We were able to give a lot of information about this Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) special in our last issue and to remind you, this is what is included (original broadcast dates in brackets).

ACT 1
"I Love Paris" (3 January, 1954) - "Swanee" (1 October, 1958) – "Ol' Man River" (2 March, 1959) - Medley (using special effect showing three Bings - "Pennies from Heaven" - "June in January" - "I'm an Old Cowhand" - "Play a Simple Melody" – 5 October, 1960) - "Now You Has Jazz" (with Louis Armstrong – 13 October, 1957)

ACT 2
"Mama Don't Allow It" (with Jose Feliciano – 23 October, 1968) - "One Little Word - Married" (with Carol Burnett – 17 December, 1969) - "It Had to Be You" (3 January, 1954) - "I Believe in You" (with Bob Hope – 15 February, 1964) - "The Oldest Established" (with Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin – 15 February, 1964)

Bing and Jose Feliciano sing "Mama Don't Allow It"

ACT 3
"Sing" (with Fred Astaire – 3 December, 1975) - "Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral" (Bing sings to Regis Philbin – 25 October, 1967) - "Pennies from Heaven" (Regis sings to Bing - 25 October, 1967) - "Swinging on a Star" (with Andy Williams – 30 October, 1966) - "Where the Blue of the Night" (11 June, 1970) - "The Little Drummer Boy/Peace on Earth" (with David Bowie – 30 November, 1977) - "White Christmas" (three clips of Bing at different points in career – 11 December, 1961 – 14 December, 1971 and 30 November, 1977)

In between each Act, the PBS station typically made a 5 to 10 minute pitch for funds whilst talking about Bing and if you gave $75 you received the CD "Bing Sings the Great American Songbook". For $100 you received a DVD of the special plus 35 minutes of material not seen in the broadcast. A donation of $150 brought both the CD and the DVD and if you went for broke and pledged $365 you got the Mosaic 7-CD set! The CD and the DVD will not be available to the general public until after September 1st.

The quality of the clips seen was generally excellent and only Bing singing "Swanee" from his October 1, 1958 special fell under this standard. In Bing's October 5, 1960 show, a split-screen technique was used so that three Bing Crosbys appeared on the screen and sang a medley with each other. This segment was included in full in the video "The Magic of Bing Crosby – part one" issued in the early 1990s but the quality was not very good. In the PBS special, we were given extracts from the medley and it's great to see what was undoubtedly an imaginative experiment at the time in top quality.

Many of us are familiar with Bing singing "Now You Has Jazz" from the Edsel show but it's never looked so good before. It's like watching it for the first time!

The linking chat between the songs was first class with Mary Crosby giving a potted history of Bing's life up to the TV years. Leonard Maltin and Michael Feinstein came in frequently with enthusiastic and complimentary comments. Indeed, Mr. Maltin expressed the thought that listening to Bing was the equivalent of comfort food. Kathryn Crosby provided useful additions to the overall package and it was interesting to hear her say that David Bowie was a little scared about singing "The Little Drummer Boy/Peace on Earth" as he was worried about the key However Bing encouraged him gently to "take a shot at it" saying he would come in somewhere.

Regis Philbin said that listening to Bing on the radio as a youth made him think that Bing was his friend, which is probably something to which we can all attest. Regis described his first meeting with Bing on the Joey Bishop show in 1967 and we heard a sound clip of Bing singing "Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral" to Regis on the show and part of Mr. Philbin's response with "Pennies from Heaven".

Andy Williams made many gracious remarks about

Bing, saying that he was the first real pop singer. He also recalled recording "Swinging on a Star" with him in 1944 and said what a huge thrill it was for him to sing with Bing on his TV show in 1966.

Your editor had never seen "Married" with Carol Burnett before although I had heard an audio version. What was completely new to me was the black and white version of our man singing "Where the Blue of the Night" from the June 1970 Buenos Aires TV telethon in which Bing and Kathryn participated. It had never been aired outside Argentina before.

This was an excellent production from Robert Bader and if your PBS station has not yet shown the special, please contact them and urge them to do so.

There have been plenty of Bing's films on TV too.

Alias Jesse James	TCM
Blue Skies	TCM
High Society	TCM
High Time	FMC
Pennies From Heaven	TCM
Pepe	TCM
Road To Bali	TCM
Road To Morocco	TCM
Road To Singapore	TCM
Road To Zanzibar	TCM

One film rarely seen is *Pepe*, the overlong story of Mexican favourite Cantinflas playing Pepe, a ranch hand looking for his horse "Don Juan" whom he calls his son. There are those who say that Bing's cameo appearance was the only part in the film worth watching. By coincidence, Keith Parkinson mentioned the rarity of the film in his *Celluloid Crosby* article in this issue and it's amazing that it should turn up at this time.

Bing meets Cantinflas at the film studio entrance.

USA Radio

The Mosaic set was enthusiastically reviewed by Dick Dinman on his *DVD Classics Corner* radio show heard on station WMPG from Maine. It sounded as though the shows were probably recorded last December. In three half-hour programs subtitled *Bing Sings Again*, Dick played many tracks from the set and, by telephone, interviewed Mary Crosby in the first two segments and then Kathryn Crosby in the last show.

Mary was very fluent as always and she related how her dad was an early-to-bed type of guy although he often didn't actually sleep as he had terrible insomnia. However if Louis Armstrong was in town he would stay up late to watch him. Mary went on to mention that as a child she appeared in one or two shows and then offers started to come in. However her parents would not allow her to go on to be a child actress, much to her disgust. Mary's involvement with *Dallas* was inevitably raised. She must get so tired of being asked questions about it but she hides it well.

In the last show, Kathryn laughed as she recounted how, when she had first met Bing, she asked him if he liked baseball (she didn't know he part owned the Pittsburgh Pirates) and then if he liked horses, (she didn't know about Del Mar). Kathryn remarked that Bing spoke and sang in the same voice – a good point to make when you think of many modern performers who leave behind a local accent and suddenly turn mid-Atlantic. Dick was very complimentary about Bing's whistling as he played "I Almost Lost My Mind." Kathryn indicated that the radio duets of Bing and Rosemary are to be issued too. Dick asked Kathryn if there was anything we do not know about Bing and she indicated that he was a man who did not show his emotions much. However, she told a story about a time when she and Bing were in Palm Springs watching Victoria de Los Angeles sing an operatic piece. Bing was obviously moved by the performance and Kathryn noticed a tear running down his face which surprised her considerably.

Bing's birthday was celebrated on Sirius-XM's "Classic Radio" station in May and he was heard hosting both a *Kraft Music Hall* show from 1944 and a Command *Performance* from 1945. In addition to those two musical radio programs, he was heard in radio versions of his Oscar winning motion pictures; *Going My Way* and *The Bells of St. Mary's*.

Greg Van Beek continues to commentate in *A Chronological Crosby* (nightly at 1:00 a.m. PT/4:00 a.m. ET) on Shokus Internet Radio at www.shokusradio.com/index.html. This is a 20 hour series in which are presented the top hits of Bing from the 1920s through the late 1970s. Mark Emanuel is the host.

Also Greg has a feature each weekday morning at 6:35 cst / 7:35 et on 1420 AM The Breeze which is now streaming online at www.1420thebreeze.com. Each morning, a different Bing Crosby performance to start your day!

TV highlights - UK

Alias Jesse James	TCM
Here Come the Waves	Sky Classics

High Society	Channel 4
Let's Make Love	Film4
My Favourite Brunette	BBC2
Road to Morocco	Sky Classics
Road to Utopia	Sky Classics
Road to Zanzibar	Sky Classics
Son of Paleface	BBC2
Stagecoach	Sky Classics
The Greatest Show on Earth	Sky Classics
The Road to Hong Kong	TCM & Sky Classics

Bing and Bob are thanked by Cecil B. DeMille for their guest spot in *The Greatest Show on Earth*

In BING #153, I complained that *Stagecoach* was never shown in the UK although it was often shown in the States. Well, lo and behold, Sky Classics showed it on April 16 and many more times after that. Although I have a Sky Movies package it did not include the Classics channel so a quick change had to be made so that I could record it. The same channel also had a mini Bing festival on May 8 showing four Road films one after the other.

BBC4, in their *Arena* slot, on April 4 showed ***Johnny Mercer: The Dream's On Me,*** the documentary film on the life and work of composer Johnny Mercer which was reviewed by Greg Van Beek and Bob Achorn in our last issue. I can only echo their comments. This was a very good programme indeed with Bing popping up all over the place. Good to see Ken Barnes and Michael Feinstein making important contributions. Apparently, this was an extended version utilising more of the BBC Johnny Mercer footage and a longer extract of Fred Astaire doing "One for My Baby." The cut ran approximately 10 minutes longer than the one broadcast in the USA. There were a number of extracts from Mercer interviews with Humphrey Lyttleton and Michael Parkinson so presumably these were the items added. Jane Asher was the narrator and again I am assuming that this was just for the UK version.

UK radio

In February, BBC Radio2 broadcast **Come Fly With Me - the Legacy of Jimmy Van Heusen** – a two part profile looking at the songwriter who played such an important part in Bing's career. The programme carried interviews with Van Heusen in which he described working on the Road films and the songs "Road to Morocco" and "Moonlight Becomes You" were played to link in with this. Later, mention was made about the writing of "Swinging on a Star" and how Van Heusen heard Bing complaining to one of his children and saying "Do you want to be a mule?" This gave Van Heusen and Johnny Burke the inspiration for the song which was then heard.

Tony Bennett's Great American Songbook, a four-part series started on BBC Radio2 on April 6. Tony guided the Radio 2 audience through his selection of the 40 defining songs from the Great American Songbook. Sir Michael Parkinson led the way through the ten songs covered each week and we heard Tony's anecdotes about the people who created them, the pantheon of singers who have interpreted them and his views about what makes each one special. Episode one started off appropriately enough with Bing and Al Jolson singing "Alexander's Ragtime Band." *The Guardian* newspaper reviewed the first episode as follows:

> **Tony Bennett Presents: The Great American Songbook** (Radio 2) is actually presented by Michael Parkinson. It's a curious and somewhat static format, with Parkinson reading his script about Bennett's career rather flatly and sounding as if he's doing so from the bottom of a deep well. But then we switch to Bennett's input, as he discusses his 40 musical choices from this body of music – he came up with the name for it, we heard – and the whole thing comes to life.
>
> The tunes help. Bing Crosby, Nat King Cole, Frank Sinatra, Billie Holiday and Judy Garland all featured in this first programme, with Bennett defining the particular magic of each. "Bing Crosby invented the art of intimate singing with the microphone," he explained. "He taught every singer in the business how to make a living." Bennett's admiring introductions nudged you to listen anew to the classics.
>
> But the programme worked, ultimately, because of the broad sweep of Bennett's musical knowledge after 60 years in the business and his wider appreciation of other art forms. Discussing the flowering of musical forms and talent in America from the 1920s onwards, he compared it to the Impressionists and late 19th-century French classical music: "With America being such a young country," he said, "the same thing happened in music." (*The Guardian*)

Funny, I liked Parky's links but got a little tired of all Tony Bennett's superlatives. We're all different aren't we! However, I almost had to eat my words when I listened to episode two because Tony introduced Bing singing "I Love You, Samantha" saying that of all Bing's records, it was his personal favourite and it was also one of his favourite records. He then talked about the song "Pick Yourself Up" and said that "Bing and Fred went at it and knocked it right out of the park." The Crosby and Astaire version from 1975 was then played. Earlier in the show, Tony said that he had only met Bing briefly once through Bob Hope but Bing had apparently heard

a lot of the young Bennett's singing because he had told Rosie Clooney that Tony had been influenced by Mildred Bailey. Tony admitted that this was absolutely correct and that as a teenager he listened to Mildred whenever he could. He also mentioned that he listened to every Bing Crosby record ever made!

The National Presenters (who have a potential audience of 60 million!)

The thoughtful and influential **Russell Davies** (strongly supported by producer Roy Oakshott) celebrates the art of songwriters in his BBC Radio2 show on Sunday evenings and he often finds a Crosby song helpful to his purpose. In discussing the song "Someday Sweetheart" for instance, he commented that nobody sang it better than Bing, "one of the most African American he ever did in his adventurous inflections." Gary Giddins described Bing's version as a masterpiece in his "Pocketful of Dreams" book and Russell agreed with him.

On his June 6 broadcast, Russell pointed out that it was close to the 50th. anniversary of Bing receiving a platinum record of "White Christmas" bearing a plaque indicating that he had sold more than 200 million records. Russell was astonished "that such a giant's reputation has failed to pass itself on to succeeding generations occasioning the once unthinkable question 'who was Bing Crosby?'" Going on to praise the Sepia series, he played "La Mer" and expressed mixed feelings about Bing's French pronunciation. However, as the original 'Le Bing' LP cover said: "Any persons who dare to find fault with Bing's French accent are advised to send their complaints to the United Nations."

The show's web site often has an interesting write-up, presumably written by Roy Oakshott, and alongside the June 6 details there were some more kind words about the Sepia series:

> *...More vocal-oriented is the latest in Sepia's "Bing Through The Years" which reaches Volume 5 and between February and November 1953 finds the Groaner in Country-mode with Perry Botkin's guitars, in International style on his first LP, recorded in Paris – a result of his new movie "Little Boy Lost"; and in a reflective mood with Buddy Cole, revisiting some oldies, some of which he'd recorded famously more than once before ('Dinah', 'After you've Gone'). Comprehensive notes; fine sound: It's on Sepia 1146.*

Russell played Dean Martin singing "If I Could Sing Like Bing" and wanted to know more about the songwriter, Victor G. David, who seems to be a mystery man. Inspired by the song, Russell laid down a challenge to see who could come up with the most songs in which either Fred Astaire or Bing were mentioned in song lyrics. This is a topic which has often surfaced over the years in BING magazine and I couldn't resist the urge to send in Dick Nettleton's list from BING #54 (October 1979). I only listed 'real' songs as opposed to one off parodies and this is what I submitted.

These Foolish Things ("the song that Crosby sings")
Ain't We Got Fun (Bob Hope / Margaret Whiting version "the poor get Crosby")
Only Forever (Al Bowlly / Jimmy Messini version "...direct from Crosby we bring it to you")
I Think I Can (Jack Buchanan - "and maybe sing like Bing")
Rum and Coca Cola ("and the natives swoon every time der Bingle croon")
When You Were Sweet Sixteen (Judy Garland version "I decided to join a monastery and would have too if it had not been for Bing Crosby")
Crosby, Columbo and Vallee (as in title)
My Kid's a Crooner ("I think I'll write to Crosby")
When The Guardsman Started Crooning on Parade (several references to Private Crosby)
If I Could Sing Like Bing (Dean Martin)
Santa Claus & Popcorn (Merle Haggard "Carollers singing Silent Night, Crosby singing Christmas white")
So Long, Bing (J.J. Barrie song)
Mr. Gallagher & Mr Shean (Mr. Crosby & Mr. Mercer)
My Baby Just Cares for Me (Nat King Cole with Woody Herman "my baby's no Crosby fan, Dick Tracy is not her man")
If You Feel Like Singing (Judy Garland "everyone can't be a Bing")
Inka Dinka Doo (Jimmy Durante "that note was given to me by Bing Crosby")
Opus One ("and maybe old Bing will give it a fling")
Because It's Christmas Time (Buck Owen "Now is the time for White Christmas with Bing")
Boy from New Orleans (Louis Armstrong "In Hollywood I took my place with my friend Bing and Princess Grace")
Taking The Steps to Russia (Cole Porter musical *Leave It To Me* (1938) "I'll give 'em Bob Crosby and Bing")
Give Me the Land (dropped from Cole Porter musical *Silk Stockings* "Give Me the Land of Ezio and Bing")
Eeny Meeny Miney Mo ("... even Mr Crosby bings it!")

I LOVE YOU, SAMANTHA
Music and Lyrics by COLE PORTER
VISTAVISION
Bing CROSBY · Grace KELLY · Frank SINATRA
"HIGH SOCIETY"
CELESTE HOLM · JOHN LUND · LOUIS CALHERN · SIDNEY BLACKMER
and LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND HIS BAND · JOHN PATRICK · COLE PORTER
TECHNICOLOR · CHARLES WALTERS · A SOL C. SIEGEL

I know that there are others, such as "The Best Is Yet to Come" by Val Doonican ("Mr. Crosby had the nation's No.1 tune"), but I couldn't recall them at the time.

Clare Teal and then **David Jacobs** follow Russell on Sunday evenings, playing Bing on occasion, and making it an ideal 3-hour session for me. As Keith Parkinson mentioned in the Letters section, Clare surprised us by playing "Seven Nights a Week" on March 28. David Jacobs seems to have a regular schedule of favourite songs and "Second Time Around" and "Incurably Romantic" pop up periodically as they did this time in the period under review. On March 28, David played Bing singing "I Love You Samantha". He explained that he had used it as the introductory theme for his radio shows since 1956 but fading the track out just before Bing began to sing. This time we heard the full version.

Desmond Carrington who has now switched his Radio2 show from Tuesday to Friday evenings also uses Bing to support whatever theme his show is following on that night.

An unlikely show in which to hear Bing is **The Chris Evans Breakfast Show** on Radio2 as Chris plays a snatch of Bing's Philco version of "Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah" every morning Monday to Friday after the 7am and 8am news. I also heard "Swinging on a Star" by Bing on the March 29 broadcast. Perhaps Chris is a secret Crosby fan.

The local presenters

Anne Hopper at BBC Radio Cumbria continues to be a prolific purveyor of Mr. Crosby's music. No less than 30 records by Bing were played since our last issue and Anne regains the "Bing on the Box" award this time. Songs as varied as "Two Cigarettes in the Dark", "You've Got Me Where You Want Me" (with Judy Garland) and "The Only Way to Go" (1976) were heard. To hear the show each week go to www.bbc.co.uk/cumbria/ and click on the 'Listen Again' tab. Anne needs requests, so please email her with a Bing choice at anne.hopper@bbc.co.uk . She'll get a kick out of requests from faraway places.

Bill Rennells, aided and abetted by his wife Angela (a real Crosby fan), hosts *Harmony Nights* which is heard throughout the South East of England for three hours starting at 10 p.m. on Sunday evenings. He is the runner-up this time for the "Bing on the Box" award with 20 Bings played. There is a tremendous variety of songs played on *Harmony Nights.* Bill had requests from Trevor Wagstaff and Stan White for Bing's birthday and he also mentioned the latest Sepia CD, playing "Sleepy Time Gal". Bert Bishop requested "I'm Thinking Tonight of My Blue Eyes" on an earlier broadcast commenting that it was one of first 78s he had bought. Trevor and Stan kept the requests going in over the months and this produced two more tracks from the Sepia CD.

"The Late Paul Barnes" hosted by loyal supporter **Paul Barnes** and heard through seven BBC local radio stations at 11 p.m. on Saturday nights has continued to feature Bing regularly. He always mentions the BING calendar and plays the "song of the month." He liked the song for May, "It's the Natural Thing to Do" but said that he sometimes winces at the choice made by the calendar compilers. At this point, I have to confess that I have been the one who selected the songs for Ron Bosley to list in his calendar. Usually there is a kind of twisted logic to my choice but, as Paul's show features jazz and blues, I know that my picking of dreamy ballads on occasion does not sit comfortably with him. In his June 6 broadcast, Paul kindly mentioned Ron's recent passing and said that the future of the calendar was in doubt. Well, we do not know how long it will be viable for us to publish a calendar but I have undertaken to prepare one for 2011 and we'll see if it sells in sufficient numbers. Paul played 14 Bing tracks in the period including "St. Louis Blues" to celebrate Bing's birthday and "The Object of My Affection" (for Stan White's birthday). Paul has also featured tracks from the wonderful Mosaic set and he sings its praises every time.

David Lowe broadcasts in the West Country and is heard on seven BBC local radio stations from Gloucestershire to the Channel Islands. A very knowledgeable presenter, his "As Times Goes By" show which had been running since 1991 has now finished and Bing was heard singing "Harbour Lights" in the final show. David still has his "Swingers and Singers" show however, a 2-hour broadcast on Sunday nights at 8 p.m. which features "nostalgic music from a time when songs had a real melody." He has played 13 Bing songs since I last reported with titles varying from "Great Day" (1929) to "May the Good Lord Bless and Keep You" (1950).

Radio Lincolnshire's **Howard Leader** (www.bbc.co.uk/lincolnshire/local_radio/) has a Sunday afternoon show and he responds to the CDs provided to him by the ICC (through Stan White) by playing a good selection of tracks. He was another to play "Sleepy Time Gal" from the latest Sepia.

Crosby stalwart Ted Laker wrote to tell me that hardworking **Jim Reilly** presented a mammoth tribute programme for Bing's birthday and the following night did his regular Crosby show. Jim is a presenter on Angel Radio (www.angelradio.moonfruit.com/), a station which aims to accentuate the positive aspects of being an older person, provide a radio station for older people to run themselves and make the station unique by specialising in records made before1960.

Bing is not forgotten in Wales and **Dewi Griffiths,** on *A String of Pearls* and **Beverley Humphreys** with her *ShowTime* programme, play the maestro frequently.

Last, but certainly not least, I had the following email in June.

> *I was working at Radio 2 in the early and mid70s where we put together the Bing Crosby Story and I later interviewed Bing during my Radio Luxembourg days, an interview which, sadly, did not remain in the archives when the English Service closed. After Radios 1 & 2 and Luxembourg I went on to run local stations in Scotland and London and currently have my own business recording shows which are broadcast world-wide on about 50 FM stations and internet stations such as www.offshoremusicradio.com and www.replayradio.net .*
> *I also presented the Sinatra Hour on ILR stations in London for some years in the 1990s.*
> *Bing gets requested regularly in my shows. Funnily*

enough, quite a lot of 60's and 70's recordings get asked for, although occasionally people do ask for 40s, 50's etc. He was a courteous man and I remember when I selected him for Star of the Week on Radio 2 we got a huge public response.
For your information, I have looked back at the tracks played in last 8 weeks:-

Seasons (from the Polydor 70's album)
Have a Nice Day (from the Daybreak 70's album)
Feels Good Feels Right (from the Decca 70's album)
When the World was Young (we took this from Bing in Paris, Ace of Hearts 1966)
Bold Fisherman (radio recording from 50's with Humphrey Bogart & Lauren Bacall)
So - five tracks in 8 shows. "Seasons" came out in the 100 most requested songs when we did a review in 2006 of 20 years of my shows on various radio stations.

Rodney Collins

Nice to read that Bing is still in demand all over the place and it is pleasing to see that the more recent tracks are in demand. I understand from Bing Crosby Enterprises that according to Amazon and Collectors' Choice, "So Rare" and "Seasons" are their best sellers of the latest batch thus far.

To all the presenters who play Bing, we send our grateful thanks. Please keep up the good work!

Malcolm Macfarlane

Once In A While

Personalities associated with Bing who have died since our last issue was prepared include:

Lena Horne, who died on May 9 aged 92, was a singer, actress, civil rights activist and, eventually, a showbusiness phenomenon. Lena Horne's singing career spanned more than 60 years. With her passionate voice and good looks, she became the first black sex symbol in the 1930s.

Lena Mary Calhoun Horne was born in a small Jewish hospital in Brooklyn, New York, on June 30 1917. Her mother was an actress and her father ran a small hotel. Horne's parents separated when she was three, and she was boarded out. She did not live with her mother again until she was 15. A year later she became a chorus singer in Harlem's fashionable Cotton Club and her mother used to chaperone her there every night. At 19, she ran away from home, got married to Louis Jones, a 28-year-old graduate of West Virginia State College, and went on to raise two children.

By now she had begun to sing regularly on radio and in 1936 toured with Noble Sissle's band (which included the great soprano saxophonist Sidney Bechet). In her autobiography, published in 1950, Lena Horne recounted harrowing stories of the indignities suffered by black performers, especially in the South. When their coach pulled up at a traffic light, for example, street corner loafers were liable to shout: "Look at all the niggers!", and spit at the coach windows. Later she was appearing at the Café Society in Greenwich Village and during this period had a romance with the boxer Joe Louis.

In 1941 Lena Horne moved to Hollywood to star at the Trocadero nightclub, an engagement which led to her appearing in the film *Panama Hattie* (1942). Her mixed ancestry - she was part white, Blackfoot Indian and Senegalese - affected her film career. During a period when black women were cast as menials, not stars, Lena Horne found many of her numbers edited out of the versions shown in southern states. The studios lightened her appearance with special white make-up but she refused to play stereotyped roles. During a brief return to Hollywood to appear in *Cabin in the Sky* (1942) she was very upset to find herself patronised by her white colleagues and later that year she was back in New York to perform at the Savoy-Plaza hotel.

Bing and Lena guest on *The Dean Martin Show* in 1967

In December 1947 Lena Horne married again. Her second husband was the white pianist and film composer Lennie Hayton, who had worked closely with Bing in the 1930s. They were married in Paris and felt obliged to keep their marriage secret for almost three years because of racist threats. It lasted until Hayton's death in 1971. Although the mixed race marriage only added to her emotional pressure, Lena went on to win international fame, finding her niche giving jazz renditions to popular songs such as 'Honeysuckle Rose' and 'The Lady is a Tramp'. She toured internationally, appearing several times at the London Palladium and the London Casino. She also recorded many albums, ranging from jazz and blues to Rodgers and Hart songs.

For 13 months in 1971-72 she suffered a catalogue of tragedy. First she lost her father. Then her son from her first marriage died of kidney failure. Soon afterwards, Lennie Hayton had a fatal heart attack. Shattered, she went into retirement but, after a time, friends persuaded her to resume her career. It reached a late climax in 1981 when her one-woman show, the award-winning *The Lady and her Music*, based on her life and career, ran for more than a year on Broadway and, subsequently, in London. Lena's infrequent interactions with Bing began in June 1944 when they

appeared on a *GI Journal* show together and ended in October 1967 when they were both guests on Dean Martin's TV show.

GORD ATKINSON'S 'THE CROSBY YEARS'

Gord's regular look at some of the many celebrities he has interviewed over the years who had a connection with Bing. This time he tells us about Donald O'Connor.

In show business parlance it can be said that Donald O'Connor was "born in a trunk." The multi-talented performer, who died in 2003 at a retirement home in California, was only three days old when his vaudeville performing parents brought him on stage. "I was the last kid out of seven and at that time the safest place for the children of show people was on stage. Everyone looked after you.

"My dad was one of the greatest acrobats that ever lived. He did amazing aerial stunts and for a time was one of the principal 'leapers' on the trapeze for Ringling Brothers. He was also a fine actor."

I met and interviewed Donald O'Connor in 1977 during what I later discovered was a difficult time in his life. A growing dependency on alcohol had led him to bouts of depression and a heart attack. At one point during our conversation, while reminiscing about late friends and relatives, he began to sob gently. He apologized and confessed that he was an incurable sentimentalist. He was, however, most pleasant and congenial. I enjoyed his company very much. I was pleased to hear years later that he had overcome his alcoholism and had become a tireless spokesman and fund-raiser for people trying to overcome their addictions.

His remarkable career has at times been overlooked by film historians. He did everything on the stage and screen from comedy to show-stopping choreography. As a dancer he was on a par with his idols, Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly. "I have had some great people teach me. I learned to dance from the waist down as a hoofer, but when I worked with Gene I learned to dance from the waist up. Then I was a complete dancer."

His first major film role was opposite Bing Crosby and Fred MacMurray in the 1938 racetrack musical-comedy, *Sing You Sinners*. He played their younger brother and joined them in a memorable scene, where they introduced Hoagy Carmichael and Frank Loesser's classic novelty song, "Small Fry."

"Despite my age I was at ease working with Bing and Fred because I was used to working with my older brothers Jack and Billy in our family's vaudeville act. I remember how thrilled I was to be working with Bing, who was the favourite recording star of all us kids. He was most thoughtful and considerate to all his co-workers.

"It was also amazing that the director, Wesley Ruggles, who was a wonderful man, gave me the opportunity to choreograph the number. I was only twelve years old; I must have been the youngest choreographer in musical history!"

A year later in an abrupt change of pace, he was featured in a Gary Cooper adventure classic, *Beau Geste*, appearing in the role of Cooper as a youngster. "Yes, I played Cooper as a boy," he recalled fondly, "the director Bill Wellman, wanted me to play the part as a young British lad and I affected an English accent. That's probably why I went un-recognized. Cooper was a gentle man and very nice to me."

Seventeen years later Bing and Donald were reunited in a 1956 remake of Cole Porter's *Anything Goes*. "I always adored Bing, but it was a very difficult role for me because I was supposed to be his pal in the picture and it was hard to adjust to an adult relationship with him. I was too much in awe of him. We became good adult friends. Anytime he was on the radio or television I made certain I was listening and watching him perform. His versatility knew no bounds. He was amazing!"

Donald and Bing do their crystal ball act in *Anything Goes*.

Long considered a "performer's performer," Donald O'Connor's name is indelibly imprinted in the firmament of Hollywood's golden age. His co-stars in big, glossy film reviews included: Ethel Merman in two Irving Berlin musicals, *Call Me Madam* in 1953 and *There's No Business Like Show Business* in 1954, with Marilyn Monroe, Dan Dailey and Mitzi Gaynor. His crowning achievement was his dynamic athletic comedy dance routine, *Make 'Em Laugh*, in the 1952

quintessential movie musical, *Singing in the Rain*, with Gene Kelly and Debbie Reynolds.

His comedic timing and versatility won him the role of straight man in the screen's nutty comedy series, *Francis (The Talking Mule)*. "When you work with a 'jackass' you begin to be identified with him. They were fun pictures to make and they are still being shown on TV. But, when the mule started getting more mail than I did, I decided it was time to quit."

On television in the 1950s he won an Emmy as the star of the *Colgate Comedy Hour* and later hosted his own variety show for Texaco.

After years of frustration and with his career in decline, he made a successful theatrical comeback in 1993 starring in a lavish revival of Jerome Kern's *Show Boat* and then followed it with a series of sold-out personal appearances. His last film assignment was as a dance instructor in the 1997 Jack Lemmon-Walter Matthau comedy, *Out to Sea*.

Married twice, he was the proud father of two daughters and two sons. He and his second wife, Gloria, were married for 46 years.

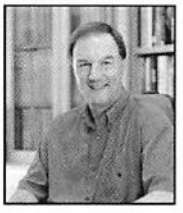
Donald O'Connor was 78 and suffering from heart failure when he left us. "I love people," he told me at the conclusion of our interview. "I was born into show business and I've loved every minute of it. It's been a magnificent career."

Gord Atkinson

(Editor: Excerpts from Gord's interview with Donald O'Connor are included on Part 7 of his award winning CD series, "The Crosby Years" – see Trading Post.)

KEEPING TRACK

Ken Crossland looks at the new releases



Where do you start!? I remember Reg Bristo's observation in this magazine in 1976 that, for English fans at least, the previous 12 months – Bing on stage and TV in London and busy in the recording studios – had been like none that we had witnessed before. A generation on, the last 9 months obviously cannot compare to the thrill we had of seeing Bing live and up close, but it is, I think, fair to say that in the 33 years since his passing, we have had nothing to compare with the feast that has been served up to us in the last nine months. First came the seven-CD Mosaic set that I reviewed last time. Now, hard on its heels, we have six CD releases on the Collectors Choice Music label, plus a double DVD, as well as more "regular" items, including Volume 5 of "Through The Years". So, on with the show!

COMPACT DISCS

Bing Crosby – Through The Years Volume 5 Sepia 1146 UK £7

1. Tenderfoot 2. Walk Me by the River 3. Cela M'est Egal 4. The Magic Window 5. Violets and Violins 6. A Propos De Rien 7. Mademoiselle De Paris 8. Au Bord De L'eau 9. Embrasse-Moi Bien 10. La Mer 11. Tu Ne Peux Pas Te Figurer 12. La Seine 13. Mon Coeur Est Un Violon 14. La Vie En Rose 15. Embrasse-Moi Bien (sung in English) 16. Mademoiselle De Paris (sung in English) 17. Do You Ever Think Of Me? 18. I Never Knew (That Roses Grew) 19. Somebody Loves Me 20. After You've Gone 21. Sleepy Time Gal 22. Dinah 23. I Never Knew (I Could Love Anybody) 24. I Can't Give You Anything But Love 25. What A Little Moonlight Can Do (with Gary Crosby) 26. Down By the Riverside (with Gary Crosby) 27. Y'all Come 28. Changing Partners

It's tempting to dive straight into the Collector's Choice releases but pride of place I believe rightly sits with the latest in the 'Through The Years' series. Volume 5 finds us firmly in 1953, between February and November and includes the latest 28 chronologically ordered recordings in a line that stretches back to 1926 and which, including the predecessor Jonzo series, now runs to 56 CDs. This set is a mixture of singles and two 10" albums, "Some Fine Old Chestnuts", which saw the first commercial release of Bing's radio tracks with Buddy Cole, and the very rare "Le Bing", 10 songs recorded in Paris in May 1953, eight of which were sung in French and appeared on the original LP. I have always enjoyed listening to Bing singing in Spanish, perhaps because I know nothing of the language. Unfortunately, I do have a little French, enough to know that Bing's French was worse even than elementary school standard. Surely someone could have pointed out that the "e" in "bien" is pronounced as an "a"! It makes "Le Bing" for me an album that is nice to have but not to listen to. But never mind. The rest of the material is terrific; a delightful "Walk Me by the River", the lively "Y'all Come" and two of the rarer duets with Gary. Roll on Volume 6.

Next, the Bing Crosby Enterprises (BCE)/Collector's Choice Music (CCM) releases, inspired and created by Robert Bader working alongside the Crosby family, and drawing from Bing's personal archive. In essence this includes

virtually all of Bing's recordings and TV shows from 1956 to the end of his life, much of it unseen and unheard. In what will hopefully become a succession of releases, this batch has five single CD releases plus one double album. They are listed here in catalogue number order. As a generic comment, all six releases are a model of good quality packaging and information provision. CCM has chosen to go with card-based sleeves rather than the usual plastic CD box, which I personally find more attractive and more akin to an LP. Each CD contains a sleeve note booklet, which includes original album artwork and notes, where applicable, plus newly written notes that set the release in its historical context. Finally, the notes on recording dates and locations are a model for an aspiring sleeve note writer.

Seasons **CCM 2104** **USA** **$10-12**

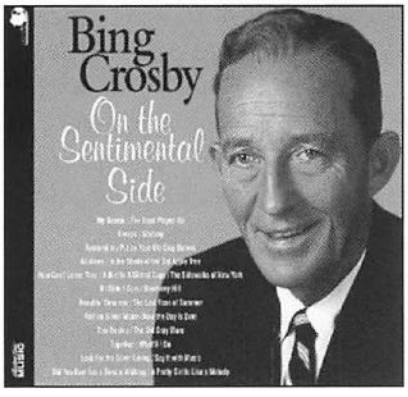
1. Seasons 2. On the Very First Day of the Year 3. June in January 4. Spring Will Be a Little Late This Year 5. April Showers 6. June Is Bustin' Out All Over 7. In the Good Old Summertime 8. Summer Wind 9. Autumn in New York 10. September Song 11. Sleigh Ride 12. Yesterday When I Was Young 13. Around the Corner 14. If 15. The Singers 16. Lucy Gray (Solitude) 17. The Slave's Dream 18. Feels Good, Feels Right 19. Nevertheless 20. The Only Way to Go 21. Summer Wind 22. The Night Is Young and You're So Beautiful 24. There's Nothing I Haven't Sung About 25. As Time Goes By 26. Once in a While

The "Seasons" LP, recorded largely in September 1977, was Bing's final commercial album and in technological terms, the most advanced in his 51-year recording career. It's ironic therefore that we should have to wait 33 years to hear it in true digital format, but it's a wait that now seems worthwhile. The album's producer was Ken Barnes and his account in his book "The Crosby Years" of how the concept came together over a two-year period is fascinating. Everyone at the sessions agreed that Bing, despite pain from his back, was in wonderful voice and this release allows us now to hear it in a way we have never done before. The sound is simply stunning and if one album had to be the final bookend of Bing's career, it is fitting that this should be it. And of course, we get much more on this release in the form of five poems that Bing recorded at the end of the "Seasons" sessions, plus Bing's eight vocals for the BBC recorded on October 11, 1977, his final professional singing engagement. All are here on CD for the first time. The poems were originally intended for private issue to clubs such as ours, and have been around in poor quality versions for some time. It's good to have them, even if they, in my opinion, were read too quickly by Bing and don't have the appeal of some of his other narrations. The BBC tracks are terrific because Bing recorded them having just completed his 1977 UK tour and with his voice having had so much exercise, his cords were looser even than the "Seasons" sessions. Most of the material comes from the "Feels Good, Feels Right" album of 1976 and few will listen to Bing's final recording of "Once In A While" without a lump in the throat.

Return To Paradise Islands **CCM 2105** **USA** **$10-12**

1. Keep Your Eyes on the Hands 2. Forevermore 3. Love and Aloha 4. Beautiful Kahana 5. The Hukilau Song 6. The Old Plantation 7. Lovely Hula Hands 8. Frangipani Blossom 9. Farewell My Tane 10. Adventures in Paradise 11. Return to Paradise 12. Home in Hawaii 13 Return to Paradise (outtake) 14. My Little Grass Shack 15. The Cockeyed Mayor of Kaunakakai 16. Yaaka Hula Hickey Dula 17. Ukulele Lady 18. King's Serenade

This album, recorded in 1963, was Bing's only full solo album for Frank Sinatra's Reprise label. Most Crosby fans were disappointed with the original release because Bing seemed to be drowned out by Nelson Riddle's backing orchestra (with some diehard Crosby fans even suggesting that such a move was part of an evil trick by Sinatra to make Bing sound old and feeble!). By accessing the original master tapes and re-mixing them, Robert Bader has now presented the album as it should have been heard all the time and as a result, it is a much better proposition. Despite that, it's an album that still doesn't work for me. Quite why the combination of Bing, Nelson Riddle and Hawaiian music should not produce a winner, I don't know, but for some reason, I just don't think it gels. That said, I am delighted to have it in its new form, but when it hits my CD tray, it's the bonus tracks – five Hawaiian songs from CBS with Buddy Cole – that I find myself playing.



On The Sentimental Side **CCM 2106** **USA** **$10-12**

1. My Bonnie/The Band Played On 2. Always/Wishing 3. Remember/Put on Your Old Gray Bonnet 4. All Alone/In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree 5. How Can I Leave Thee/A Bird in a Gilded Cage/The Sidewalks of New York 6. If I Didn't Care/Blueberry Hill 7. Beautiful Dreamer/The Last Rose of Summer 8. Roll on Silver Moon/Now the Day Is Over 9. Tom Dooley/The Old Gray Mare 10. Together/What'll I Do 11. Look For the Silver Lining/Say It with Music 12. Did You Ever See a Dream Walking/A Pretty Girl Is Like a Melody 13. Because 14. Love's Old Sweet Song 15. Smilin' Through 16. Whither Thou Goest 17. Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral

This is the rarest and most intriguing of the CCM releases because it is the only complete album of Bing's that was definitely known to exist but which had never seen release in any form. Indeed, until Robert Bader accessed the component parts in Bing's vault – the vocals on one set of tapes and the backing tracks on another – it had never actually been concluded in a final mix. Now it has and every collector will cheer, although will equally wonder what it was that made Bing do so much Glee-club backed singalong material. Perhaps we should blame Mitch Miller. A current You Tube clip contains part of a Miller TV show from 1960, old songs sung by a chorus and very much the model that Bing adopted for his "Gang Songs" albums for Warner Brothers, plus this album's older sister, "On The Happy Side". There are many attractive songs on this album that Bing did not get to on any other recording date, but equally there are some that he came back to later in the Sixties on the Longines sets. It's a shame that they are bogged down in this Mitch Miller style. One interesting note in passing is that the arrangements and the backing tracks were all done in England by Ivor Raymonde, who shortly afterwards, was responsible for turning Dusty Springfield into a major international star. As with "Paradise Islands", there are five bonus CBS tracks of a "sentimental" nature on the disc and with the possible exception of "All Alone" they are better than anything else on the main album.

Bing On Broadway **CCM 2107** **USA** **$10-12**

1. Swanee 2. Carolina in the Morning 3. Mandy 4. How Long Has This Been Going On? 5. My Heart Stood Still 6. Crazy Rhythm 7. Ain't Misbehavin' 8. Fine and Dandy 9. But Not for Me 10. New Sun in the Sky 11. Taking a Chance on Love 12. It's Only a Paper Moon 13. All Through the Night 14. Come Rain or Come Shine 15. A Cockeyed Optimist 16. It's All Right with Me 17. Hey There 18. Heart 19. Get Me to the Church on Time

This is the kind of CD release that gets labels a bad name. There is nothing wrong with the quality of the product and the content is marvellous. The problem is that 17 of the 19 tracks appeared on the Mosaic set just before Christmas and having paid top dollar for them then, I resent having to purchase them again just to obtain the two other tracks on this CD. The two "extras" are "It's Only a Paper Moon" and "A Cockeyed Optimist", both of which come from Bing's GE radio programme and feature Bing with the John Scott Trotter orchestra. As with the CBS material, Bing recorded many of the GE songs in a studio for editing into the programmes and we must hope that more of these see future release. But please, BCE, do the decent thing and don't make us pay twice for the same material.

El Senor Bing **CCM 2108** **USA** **$10-12**

Stereo album 1. In the Still of the Night/I Could Have Danced All Night 2. C'est Magnifique/Taking a Chance on Love 3. Heavenly Night (Cielito Linda)/ My Shawl 4. Marta/The Rose in her Hair 5. How High the Moon/Old Devil Moon 6. Pagan Love Song/Cuban Love Song 7.Ramona/Amapola 8. Malaguena (At the Crossroads)/Andalucia (The Breeze and I) 9. Down Argentine Way/What a Difference a Day Made 10. Again/Allez- Vous-En (Go Away) **Mono album** 11.Ramona/Amapola 12. Marta/The Rose in her Hair 13. Again/Allez- Vous-En (Go Away) 14. In the Still of the Night/I Could Have Danced All Night 15. Pagan Love Song/Cuban Love Song 16. Down Argentine Way/What a Difference a Day Made 17. Heavenly Night (Cielito Linda)/ My Shawl 18. Malaguena (At the Crossroads)/Andalucia (The Breeze and I) 19. How High the Moon/Old Devil Moon 20. C'est Magnifique/Taking a Chance on Love **Buddy Cole tracks** 21. Papa Loves Mambo 22. Solamente Una Vez (You Belong to My Heart) 23. La Borrachita (I'll Never Love Again) 24. Flores Negras (You're the Moment of a Lifetime) 25. No Te Importe Saber (Let Me Love You Tonight) 26. In a Little Spanish Town

This is the oddest of this batch of releases in that we get the same album twice, once in stereo and once in mono. Although the mono tracks are referred to as "Alternate Masters", as far as I can tell the only difference is the mono sound; the vocals are the same. There is a trend towards releasing old albums in their mono and stereo versions – the recent remastered set of Beatles albums did just that – although why this should happen only with "El Senor Bing", I don't know. Sadly, the album is just as bad in mono as it is in stereo. Billy May's arrangements are about as far from an authentic Latin sound as England is from California, and worse still, all the songs are doubled into the singalong medley style a la "On The Sentimental Side". Bing's singing is fine – it's just everything else that is wrong. As with the Hawaiian album though, the CD is worth its price just for the 6 Buddy Cole tracks, which to my mind are some of the best of the CBS material. Buy it and start at track 21 is my advice.

So Rare – Treasures From the Crosby Archive **CCM 2109** **USA** **$20-25**

Disc 1 1. Just One More Chance 2. Bing talks about his first radio show 3. I'm Through with Love 4. Buckin' the Wind (Spanish radio promo disc) 5. Where the Turf Meets the Surf (Del Mar race track's theme song) 6. Over the Rainbow 7. As Time Goes By 8. I'll Be Seeing You 9. Why Don't You Fall in Love with Me 10. You're the Gem State, Idaho 11. Santa Claus Is Coming to Town (1954 recording for Shriner's Hospital) 12. What Do You Mean, You Lost Your Dog? (My Dog Rover) 13. We're in the Money (The Golddigger's Song) 14. I Hear Music 15. I Can't

Get Started 16. Because 17. Bing talks about rock'n roll 18. Pledging My Love 19. The Yellow Rose of Texas 20. My Old Kentucky Home (Kentucky Junior Derby)

Disc 2 1. So Rare (Ford Road Show) 2. Straight down the Middle 3. Tomorrow's My Lucky Day 4. The Second Time Around 5. Incurably Romantic 6. Anthem of the Clams 7. Pennies from Heaven 8. Far from Home 9. How Green Was My Valley 10. Step to the Rear 11. What Do We Do with the World 12. Live a Little 13. Don't Let a Good Thing Get Away 14. Take a Longer Look 15. The Human Race 16. That's What Life Is All About

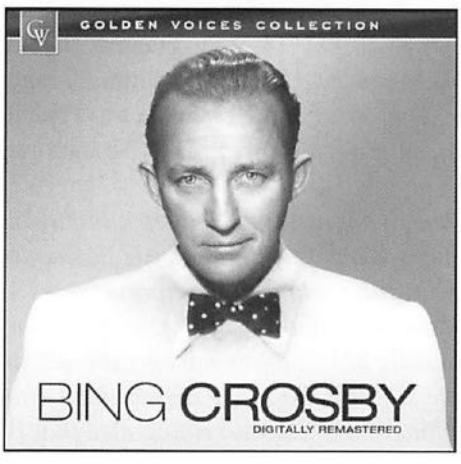
This is the real treasure in the BCE/CCM batch and the producers, Robert Bader in particular, enjoy enormous credit for releasing such a rare and diverse set of tracks. Normally this type of material only ever appears on private releases, with a low budget and often poor quality, but here we have a double CD, great presentation and great sound quality. And the stuff that's on here! There's Kraft material (a stunning rendition of "Over The Rainbow"), private recordings, very rare CBS stuff (I thought Bing would suit "Yellow Rose Of Texas" much better than he does) and the standout item for me, Bing with just guitar accompaniment on a wondrous rendition of "My Old Kentucky Home", recorded in 1958 but with original, non-politically correct lyrics. Wonderful! Disc 2 is equally good, giving us stereo versions of some rare singles for the first time (how much better "The Second Time Around" sounds), the full set of Reprise singles (the unreleased "Live A Little" is a delight) and two previously unknown studio recordings of the songs from the "Goldilocks" TV programme. Some might argue that whenever unreleased items come around, the original flaws that stopped their original release do become apparent. That may be so here but this is an album for us, the collectors, not the newcomer to Bing. It's fantastic to have so many gaps filled.

America I Hear You Singing **Universal** **UK** **£5-7**

1. America I Hear You Singing (Fred Waring and His Pennsylvanians) 2. This Is a Great Country (Bing) 3. The House I Live In (Frank Sinatra) 4. The Hills of Home (FW) 5. This Land Is Your Land (Bing) 6. Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor (FW) 7. You're a Lucky Fellow, Mr. Smith (FS) 8. A Home in the Meadow (Bing) 9. Early American (FS) 10. You Never Had It So Good (Frank & Bing) 11. Let Us Break Bread Together (Frank & Bing) 12. The Stars and Stripes Forever (FW)

Speaking of Bing on Reprise, this is one of the two albums that Bing made with Frank Sinatra and Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians, recorded in 1964. Sinatra and Bing have three solo tracks each; there are two duets and four tracks by the Waring group. This is part of a series of releases inspired by the Sinatra family, which to a degree has been the model for the BCE/CCM initiative. It's released only in England as yet, but available for import for US readers (a curiosity since its American patriotism theme would surely sell better the other way round). There are no new sleeve notes to give the historical context of the recordings which have been newly remastered and the sound is terrific, although it was always an album that the Sinatra-conspiracy theorists struggled with because Bing's voice was well to the fore, but is even better now.

Golden Voices – Bing Crosby **Amazon.com** **USA** **$7.99 (download) $13.99 (CD)**



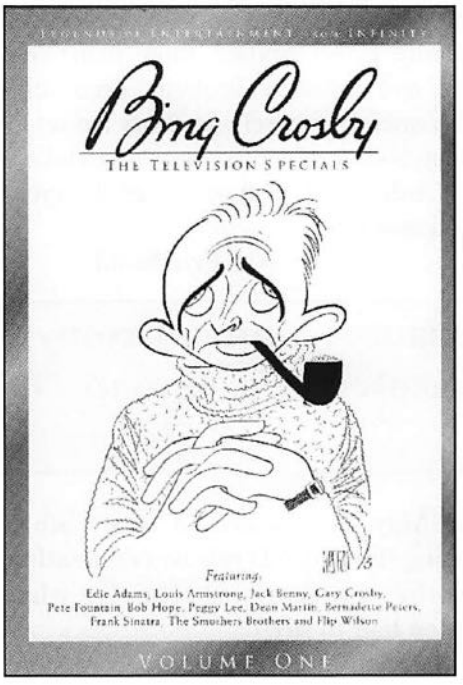
1. White Christmas 2. Dinah (with The Mills Brothers) 3. Pennies From Heaven 4. Blue Hawaii 5. Sweet Leilani 6. Please (1932) 7. Sweet and Lovely 8. Dancing in the Dark 9. This Is My Night To Dream 10. On the Sentimental Side 11. Try a Little Tenderness 12. Song of the Islands 13. Black Moonlight 14. Too Marvellous for Words 15. I've Got the World On a String 16 (I Don't Stand) A Ghost of a Chance With You 17. Sweet Georgia Brown 18. Still the Bluebird Sings 19. Sing a Song of Sunbeams 20. Ac-cent-tchu-ate the Positive (with The Andrews Sisters) 21. Silver Bells (with Carol Richards)

Last and least, is a CD that is available from Amazon.com, either as a disc or as a download. Familiar tracks, shown as remastered although listening to the samples online, they are no better than the versions that we have through the Jonzo releases. Track 21 is wrongly listed by Amazon as featuring Bing with Rosemary Clooney, when in fact it is the commercial release with Carol Richards alongside our man. Delightful colourised picture of Bing on the sleeve.

DVD

Bing Crosby – The Television Specials Volume 1 **IEG 2206** **USA** **$15-25**

1. The Bing Crosby Show – January 3, 1954 2. The Bing Crosby Show for Oldsmobile – September 29, 1959 3. The Bing Crosby Special – May 14, 1962 4. Bing Crosby – Cooling It! – April 13, 1970 plus bonus material *Faith Hope & Hogan* (1952)/Bing first colour TV interview 1954/1962 local TV interview from Hawaii/1964 commercial for


Bing Crosby
THE TELEVISION SPECIALS
Featuring:
Edie Adams, Louis Armstrong, Jack Benny, Gary Crosby,
Pete Fountain, Bob Hope, Peggy Lee, Dean Martin, Bernadette Peters,
Frank Sinatra, The Smothers Brothers and Flip Wilson
VOLUME ONE

Thermo-Fax copier/1967 Australian TV interview

Only one DVD to focus on this time, but what a release it is! A double DVD released by Bing Crosby Enterprises, to sit alongside the Mosaic sets and the CCM CDs. It contains four full shows, Bing's 30-minute TV debut from 1954 and then three specials from 1959, 1962 and 1970. The first three shows are black and white, and almost certainly, the 1959 and 1962 shows are kinescope copies, which until the advent of videotape was the only way of filming a live TV show. Quality of kinescopes by today's standards is often poor, but the remastering work that has been done here is as good as anyone can get. The images are sharp and the sound very clear. By 1970 of course, we were into the modern world and the picture quality of "Cooling It" is simply magnificent as is the sound. Content of these four shows is excellent – some good vocals from the 1954 shows, although two of them are mimed to Bing's recent Decca recordings. The 1959 show has a great jazz theme running through it, whilst the last two shows both take leisure as their theme. Video versions of them all have been around for a while in variable quality and I personally have never seen a watchable version of "Cooling It" before. Bing's rendition of "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head" is a masterly piece of television – and good singing too.

Happy listening!

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(Editor: Thanks Ken, for a thoughtful examination of these wonderful releases. Ken certainly had a lot to cover this time and many other reviewers took a look at the new releases too.)

Bing Crosby, Beyond His Greatest Hits

Our friend Will Friedwald was quick to consider the new Collectors' Choice issues, and the Mosaic set too, in the Wall St. Journal of April 28

If Bing Crosby wasn't the single most important figure in 20th century popular music—and, in particular, the most influential singer of the great American songbook—it's difficult to know who would be. He cast a giant shadow over the entire landscape of American music, touching upon the pop icons who followed him (Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley and the Beatles all paid their respects) and into the worlds of jazz, rhythm and blues, and country music. There's even a famous calypso record dedicated in his honor.

The impact of Crosby (1903-1977) upon American culture was enormous—a sea change that was both musical and technological. He was the first major pop vocalist to incorporate the swinging rhythms and improvisatory essence of the new American music called jazz into his singing, which, in turn, allowed him to bring a hitherto unheard casualness and intimacy to American pop. He also was the first vocalist to fully fathom the equation of the new electronic media: electrical recording, radio and sound film. His mastery of these forms empowered him to become the biggest musical star of the Depression and World War II eras—and an inspiration for generations of performers and singers, including Sinatra.

Heard today, Crosby's warm, mellifluous baritone is still as engaging and moving as ever. If Crosby is less a part of the discussion than he should be, it's partly the fault of the organizations that control the rights to his performances. While the estates of Sinatra and Presley have taken steps to make sure the catalogs of these iconic artists remain accessible, the only Crosby music that has been readily available in the three decades since the singer's death were Christmas albums and basic greatest-hits collections.

That situation, at last, is starting to change. In the past few months, more of Crosby's music—particularly from the harder-to-hear later portion of his career—has been made available than ever before in the compact-disc era. Bing Crosby Enterprises has supervised the release of six individual packages (one a two-CD set) from Collectorschoicemusic.com as well as an epic seven-CD box from Mosaic Records, "The Bing Crosby CBS Radio Recordings (1954-56)."

Not all the new releases are equally valuable: There's a sappy singalong album ("On the Sentimental Side") and a lackluster pair of ethnocentric concept sets ("Return to Paradise Islands" and "El Señor Bing"). These are strictly for completists, although all three are graced with extraordinary bonus tracks that are more exciting than the main event. By contrast, "Bing on Broadway" gives us Crosby doing excellent songs in

excellent voice, on tracks compiled mostly from the same radio recordings that make up the Mosaic box. The 1977 "Seasons" is especially welcome; this was Crosby's last album, recorded in London shortly before his death. (Copies of the LP frequently change hands on eBay, some advertised by their sellers as being autographed by Crosby—which would be a neat trick, since it was released posthumously.)

The "CBS Radio" box is an extraordinary mother lode of previously unreleased Crosby: 160 songs that no one has heard unless they were listening to the singer's daily 15-minute radio series of the mid-1950s. (Although some of the tracks were, shortly after the singer's death, released with an overdubbed orchestra.) It's an amazing amalgam of everything from ancient tunes Crosby remembered from his childhood ("They Didn't Believe Me") to a variety of contemporary hits that were then on the jukebox, even such unlikely items as mambos ("Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White") and country songs ("I'm a Fool to Care"). Pianist Buddy Cole and his trio provide all the accompaniment; Cole borders on the annoying when he switches to electric organ, but on the bulk of the tracks he helps Crosby keep everything light and highly swinging.

The biggest revelation in the package is a session recorded with an eight-piece traditional jazz band probably arranged by clarinetist Matty Matlock. Crosby is totally in his element here, doing 12 songs from the jazz age—his impetuous youth. The singer enters "Yes Sir! That's My Baby" almost completely a capella, backed only by drummer Nick Fatool's rimshots—an amazingly difficult opening. You can tell Crosby's senses of rhythm and pitch are both highly developed, and the dozen songs are a rare example of Crosby actually calling attention to his technique. He's never sounded more loose, buoyant and, particularly on "Sometimes I'm Happy," full of contagiously good spirits. Much about the session suggests that Crosby might have been thinking of releasing these tracks commercially, but if so he abandoned that idea in favor of his masterpiece Dixieland album, "Bing With a Beat," the next year.

The other essential new release is "So Rare: Treasures From the Crosby Archive." This double-disc package was compiled with hardcore Crosby collectors in mind, but the music is of such a high quality that even newcomers to Der Bingle will find much to enjoy. The set starts in 1931 with two songs from Crosby's breakthrough broadcast, and continues up through the war years (a beautiful reading of "Over the Rainbow"), into the Eisenhower era and a fascinating group of movie and show tunes from the 1960s. "So Rare" ends intriguingly with the live "That's What Life Is All About," from one of his final concerts. In a spoken introduction he compares the song, partly written by the singer himself, to Sinatra's "My Way" and Sammy Davis Jr.'s "I Gotta Be Me." Normally, it's hard to stomach these high-blown anthems of self-celebration, but "That's What Life Is All About," more than "My Way," is reflective and inwardly probing, even self-deprecating and, for once, not merely a victory lap set to music. Besides, if anybody had earned the right to take a bow, it was Bing Crosby at the end of one of the great careers in American music.

Will Friedwald

A Bing Bonanza - Bing Crosby's legacy cemented by group of reissues

***Jazz Times* of May 24 was one of many other publications praising the new CD releases emanating from Bing Crosby Enterprises. Here's what Christopher Loudon had to say.**

Scan the vocal section of any sizeable record store (if, that is, you can actually locate a bricks-and-mortar record store) and you'll likely conclude that Bing Crosby has fared less well than, say, Sinatra or Fitzgerald or Vaughan in terms of CD releases. Fact is, a plethora of Crosby discs exists, but the vast majority are compilations constructed around his major hit-making years during the 1930s and 1940s.

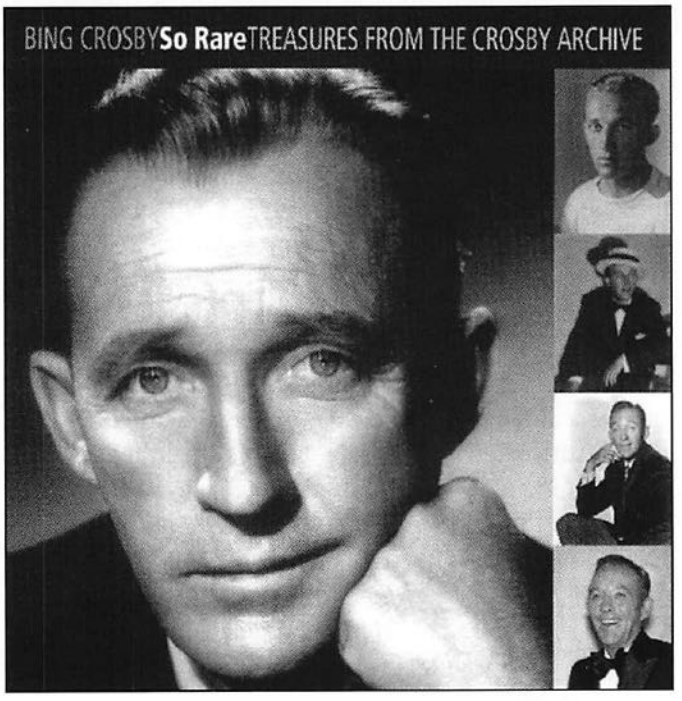
Harder to find is Crosby material from the 1950s onward, for a couple of logical reasons. His recorded output slowed during this period (remember that Crosby was about a half-generation older than singers, like Sinatra and Fitzgerald, who are often considered his peers, and hit his popularity peak earlier). Also, he ended his longtime association with Decca during the '50s and, clever businessman that he was, maintained control of much of his subsequent work, essentially leasing his services to a wide variety of labels both major and minor, understandably resulting in spotty rereleases. Yes, two of Crosby's finest mid-'50s efforts, *Bing Sings Whilst Bregman Swings* with Buddy Bregman from 1956 and the following year's exceptional *Bing With A Beat* have surfaced on CD, as has *Fancy Meeting You Here*, his delightful, round-the-world romp with pals Rosemary Clooney and Billy May from 1959. Beyond that sturdy trio, reissues have been haphazard at best.

Recently, though, a bounty of Bing's post-1950 work has surfaced. The sweetest vein of this mother lode comes from Mosaic Records, the venerable breeder of beautifully appointed box sets that make completists' hearts beat a little faster. Mosaic's seven-disc collection of *The Bing Crosby CBS Radio Recordings 1954-56* includes 160 tracks laid down with keyboardist Buddy Cole and his then trio (guitarist Vince Terri, bassist Don Whitaker and drummer Nick Fatool). Recorded over several marathon sessions, during which Crosby would deliver upwards of 20 tracks in a matter of hours (many in a single take), all were created for inclusion in his 15-

minute CBS radio show that ran weeknights at 9:15pm from '54 through '56. That's roughly the equivalent of 13 albums. The material is by and large top-drawer, mixing Tin Pan Alley classics with popular hits of the day. But the set's greatest appeal is how it captures Crosby at arguably the height of his vocal appeal. After nearly a quarter-century of near-constant use, his voice is in tremendously good shape. But the real charm resounds from Crosby's progression (begun in the mid-'40s) from crooner to vocal conversationalist, his easy, laidback style suggesting assured sophistication blended with delectable dollops of cornpone. Crosby dips into the Doris Day, Dean Martin, Nat "King" Cole and Clooney songbooks, and borrows liberally from the Sinatra canon, making "Love and Marriage," "The Tender Trap," "Isle of Capri" and "You're Sensational" uniquely his own. And he proves particularly adept at elevating so-so pop material, adding unexpected depth and beauty to the likes of Joni James' fluffy "How Important Can It Be," Les Baxter's sparkly "Wake the Town and Tell the People" and Jaye P. Morgan's overblown "Danger! Heartbreak Ahead."

Of the 160 selections, only a handful has appeared previously on LP or CD. In 1956, at the conclusion of Crosby's association with Decca, the label gathered a dozen of the CBS tracks under the title *Some Fine Old Chestnuts*. Another dozen followed the year after, this time with the opposing title *New Tricks* (complete with a fedora-sporting, pipe-smoking Basset hound on the cover). A twofer disc, containing both albums plus five bonus tracks from later '50s sessions, was released in 1999, but is now out of print. A few additional tracks were released in the UK in the 1960s. But more than 80 percent of the CBS tracks are available for the first time on the Mosaic set.

Not to be outdone, Collector's Choice has unearthed 121 late-career Crosby tracks (some overlapping the Mosaic material), including a profusion of rare, previously unreleased and new to CD material. The cornerstone of the six releases, the two-disc *So Rare: Treasures from the Crosby Archive*, actually spans Crosby's entire career, extending from 1931 radio renditions of "Just One More Chance" and "I'm Through With Love" and an assortment of Kraft Music Hall performances from the early 1940s, to private recordings of "Where the Turf Meets the Surf" (crafted as the theme song for San Diego's Del Mar Turf Club, of which Crosby was part owner) and "You're the Gem State Wonder, Idaho" (set to the tune of "Buckle Down, Winsocki," with Crosby-penned lyrics written for his friend, University of Idaho president Jesse E. Buchanan), an obscure pair of Columbia recordings about Bing's favourite sport, golf, from 1957 and a sentimental treatment of "That's What Life Is All About" captured in 1976 during one of Crosby's final concerts, with Nelson Riddle at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. Six of the 36 tracks are culled from the Buddy Cole CBS sessions. The title track, "So Rare," also features Cole and his trio, but comes from a 1957 session for the Ford Road Show.



If you shell out for the Mosaic set, you can skip *Bing on Broadway*. All but two of the 19 tracks are from the Cole/CBS sessions. The exceptions, both excellent, are 1954 recordings of "It's Only a Paper Moon" and "A Cockeyed Optimist" with John Scott Trotter and his Orchestra for *The Bing Crosby Show for General Electric*.

Prior to the Brazilian craze that swept popular music in the early 1960s, Mexican- and Latin American-themed albums were briefly the rage. Among the mini-genre's best were *Mel Tormé Olé Tormé* with Billy May and Rosemary Clooney's saucy *A Touch of Tabasco* with Cuban bandleader Perez Prado, both from 1959. The following year, Crosby released the equally fine *El Señor Bing*, also with May. Available for the first time on CD, the Collector's Choice disc includes both the mono and stereo mixes of the album, plus six Spanish-themed tracks from the CBS/Cole recordings. Intriguingly, Crosby and May constructed the entire album of paired songs, ranging from a straightforward blending of "Ramona" and "Amapola" to an unusual but effective amalgamation of "Down Argentine Way" and "What a Difference a Day Made."

Though considerably less popular than the Spanish and Brazilian waves that lapped the shores of American music, there was also a passing infatuation with Hawaiian songs. Crosby was one of the few mainstream artists to devote an entire album to tunes from the 50th state, releasing *Return to Paradise Islands* on Sinatra's Reprise label in 1963. Actually, Crosby was no stranger to Hawaiian material. At the very beginning of his career he earned a minor hit with "Song of the Islands" and scored a massive success with "Sweet Leilani" after

performing it in 1937's *Waikiki Wedding*. ("Sweet Leilani" would also have the dubious distinction of besting the Gershwins' "They Can't Take That Away from Me" for Best Song at the 1938 Oscar ceremony). The 1963 sessions, under the deft direction of Nelson Riddle, are surprisingly soft and lovely. The hokum is reserved for the five bonus tracks, recorded in 1961 (yet again with Buddy Cole and his Trio) for radio's The Crosby-Clooney Show, including "The Cockeyed Mayor of Kaunakakai" and "Yaaka Hula Hickey Dula."

Among the more regrettable of America's musical infatuations was its late '50s/early '60s affection for sing-along sessions, fueled primarily by Mitch Miller's remarkably popular *Sing Along with Mitch* TV show and recordings. Crosby, who introduced many of the old-time hits at the core of the sing-along songbook, jumped aboard the bandwagon in a big way. As James Ritz explains in his insightful liner notes, in 1960 Crosby began a series of albums known as the "Join Bing and Sing" collection. Three LPs — *Join Bing and Sing Along 33 Great Songs, Join Bing and Sing 101 Gang Songs* and *On the Happy Side* — were recorded for Crosby's own Project Records and, perplexingly, were simultaneously leased to both RCA and Warner Brothers Records. A fourth album, *On the Sentimental Side* was also recorded but was released by neither label and has remained unissued until now. Sweeter and more syrupy than a banana split, the dozen tracks are sure to have only limited appeal to contemporary listeners. Again selections from the Buddy Cole/CBS sessions are added as bonus tracks. An additional track, a fresh take on "Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral," from the Cole-led 1960 recordings for The Crosby-Clooney Show is also included.

Chronologically last, though certainly not least, is *Seasons*, the CD debut of Crosby's career-concluding album, released in 1977. Sounding remarkably robust at age 73, Crosby covers a wide spectrum of seasons-themed material, ranging from lively renditions of "June Is Bustin' Out All Over" and "In the Good Old Summertime" to tender readings of "Spring Will Be a Little Late This Year" and "Yesterday When I Was Young." The dozen *Seasons* tracks are augmented with 13 bonus selections. Eight are from his final recording session, conducted at the BBC just three days prior to his death on October 14, 1977. The remaining five were also recorded in London, on September 14, and feature Crosby's stirring, spoken-word recitations of popular poems, including Rudyard Kipling's "If" and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's "The Singers."

In addition to the six Crosby CD releases, Collector's Choice has also compiled an excellent, two-DVD collection of der Bingle's TV specials. Included are: *The Bing Crosby Show for General Electric* from January 1954, with Jack Benny; *The Bing Crosby Show* for Oldsmobile from September 1959, featuring all-star support from Louis Armstrong, Frank Sinatra and Peggy Lee; *The Bing Crosby Show* from May 1962, with Bob Hope, Edie Adams and Gary Crosby; and, from April 1970, *Bing Crosby—Cool It*, with Flip Wilson and Bernadette Peters. The DVD set is billed as *The Television Specials: Volume 1*, which enticingly suggests there will be more volumes to follow.

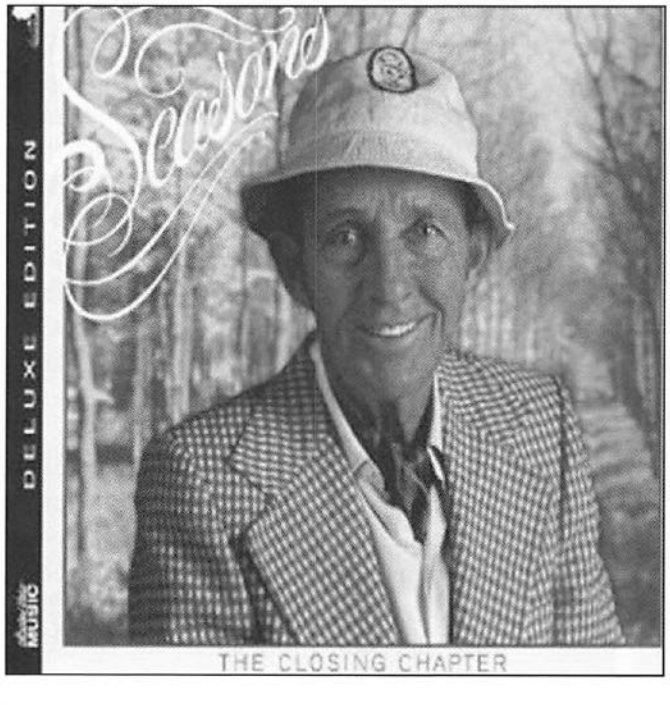
In recent years, Collector's Choice has served as an invaluable source for vocal rereleases, providing fans with dozens of otherwise impossible-to-find CD reissues of albums by Bobby Darin, Peggy Lee, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., Johnny Mathis and others. Here's hoping that they continue to dig into the Crosby vault and extract such rare delights as his 1953 collection of Parisian ditties, *Le Bing*, 1956's *Songs I Wish I'd Sung the First Time Around* and *Holiday In Europe* from 1961.

Christopher Loudon

(Editor: And so say all of us – although of course Le Bing is already on the latest Sepia CD. Several people writing on Steve Fay's Free-Speech site praised the 'Seasons' release and this led Ken Barnes to respond.

"I am glad that so many people have expressed their liking for the new deluxe edition of "Seasons." I think the added bonus tracks make it an important issue both historically and in terms of quality. Certainly it shows that Bing was a vocal force to be reckoned with right to the end of his career and life. In all the sessions I produced of Bing, he was very well-prepared and worked faster than any artist I have ever known. Usually, he nailed each track in two to three takes which means that every album he did came in under budget…

During the three years - and six albums - I worked with him, every session was memorable in its own way (the magical duet sequences with Johnny Mercer and Fred Astaire, the great moments on stage at the London Palladium with Rosemary Clooney and Joe Bushkin), but the last three sessions that made up the "Seasons" album were especially moving for me.



When he turned up for the first of these sessions on the morning of September 12, 1977, he was clearly in pain from his back injury. I could see him wincing at certain times as he flattened his back against the wall to ease the pressure. It was then that I wondered what he would sound like and I toyed with the idea of asking him if he wanted to call off the session. But, as Pete Moore gave the orchestra the downbeat and the sound of Pete's magnificent orchestration on "September Song" filled the studio, Bing's voice came through the speakers with such resonance and richness that I knew this was going to be an exceptional date - and it was. He put it away in just two takes. The song that followed was "Autumn In New York" and, if anything, his delivery and projection of this Vernon Duke classic - with its difficult intervals - was even better. I think, of all the studio tracks that I recorded of Bing, this ranks as my favourite alongside "Children" (from the January 1976 Los Angeles session), "Change Partners" (from the July, 1975 London sessions with Fred Astaire) and, of course, "Yesterday When I Was Young" and "September Song" - from "Seasons."

Other highlights in "Seasons" for me are the robust swinging performances on such items as "On The Very First Day of the Year," "Spring Will Be a Little Late This Year" and "In The Good Old Summertime." Apart from his immaculate pitch, Bing had incontestable time. Qualities that mark him as a natural jazz singer. This last album - along with his excellent final radio date three days before his untimely demise prove beyond question that his vocal quality and interpretive skills remained undiminished to the very end.

The last time I saw him was on October 11th when he did that last BBC date after which I accompanied him to a photo studio where he posed for the "Seasons" cover shot. Then I took him to the Dorchester where he had a business meeting. As he left the cab, he shook my hand and said "I'm off to Spain for a few days to play some golf. I'll see you and Pete in California in about ten days or a couple of weeks. Three days later, his passing was headline news around the world. I often think about what we could have achieved in the studios if only he had lived a few more years. But I'm grateful for those three years and six albums. And it's good to know that they are still in circulation.

Ken Barnes

(Editor: Jon Oye writing on the Bing Crosby Facebook page offered this opinion on one of the other albums.)

El Señor Bing

I received my Collector's Choice CD of "El Señor Bing" today. The album has never been one of my favorites, but after listening to this newly remastered release it has just jumped several notches up the chart. The problem, of which I was unaware until now, has always been with the original stereo mix. Until the late 1960s, LPs were mixed for their monophonic releases first; the stereophonic versions were usually secondary, and far less studio time was spent on them. Unfortunately, the stereo mix of "El Señor Bing" apparently suffered more than most LPs for that reason.

Billy May's backing, relegated to one of the two channels, always sounded uncharacteristically tinny and distant, as if it were coming out of an antique Victrola. As a result Bing's voice simply overwhelmed its accompaniment. The stereo mix is much better on this CC release, but the real revelation is the bonus MONO mix of each of the tracks. In them, the full, robust Billy May sound comes through loud and clear, and it's infinitely better than its stereo counterpart. If you buy this (and I highly recommend you do), skip to track 11, where the mono version begins.

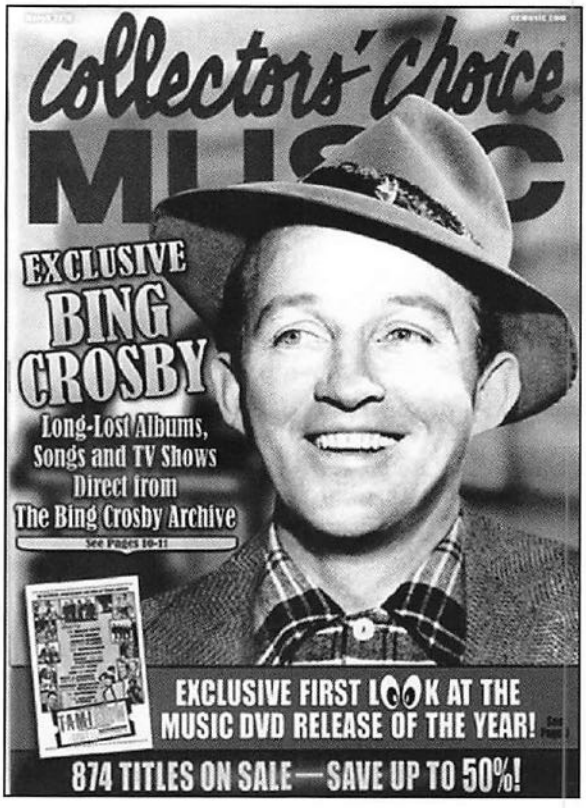
Jon Oye

Collectors' Choice Top Ten

It was nice to see that on May 13, Bing had four items in Collectors' Choice Music's top ten sales list. This is how their chart looked.

1. Clint Eastwood: Rawhide's Clint Eastwood Sings Cowboy Favorites
2. The Orlons: The Wah-Watusi / South Street
3. Terry Knight & The Pack / Reflections
4. Bobby Rydell Salutes The Great Ones / Rydell At The Copa
5. Bing Crosby: So Rare: Treasures From The Crosby Archive
6. Various Artists: Hard To Find 45's On CD Vol. 12: '60s & '70s Pop Classics
7. Bing Crosby: Seasons (Deluxe Edition)
8. Bing Crosby: The Television Specials Vol. 1 (DVD)

9. Bing Crosby: Return To Paradise Islands (Deluxe Edition)
10. Various Artists: Cameo Parkway Vocal Groups Vol. 1: Remember Me Baby



(Editor: The latest Sepia release has naturally been rather overshadowed this time but Richard Baker had some nice things to say about it on The Bing Crosby Free Speech Fan Forum.)

Through the Years – Vol. 5

Buyers of this CD are in for a treat. First rate transfers (as usual), informative notes and a musical feast from the first opening whistled chords of "Tenderfoot", through all the French songs which have been so overlooked, the duets with Gary - "What a Little Moonlight Can Do" and "Down By The Riverside", to the upbeat "Y'All Come" and ending in the lovely waltz tune of "Changing Partners". Piggy banks might have suffered recently from so many issues, but you have to have this one.

Richard Baker

Announcement

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

45th ANNUAL DINNER / MEETING

Weetwood Hall, Conference Centre & Hotel
Otley Road, Leeds, West Yorkshire. LS16 5PS, UK
Telephone: 0113 230 6000
Website: www.weetwood.co.uk

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3rd 2010, 2pm - 10pm

A cordial and warm invitation is extended to all members, their partners and friends to attend our forthcoming dinner / meeting. This is the 45th annual dinner held in Leeds to celebrate Bing's life and times, and as usual, we shall have some interesting DVD material for you to see, using the excellent facilities at Weetwood Hall available for this purpose.

We have kept the official start time at 2 p.m. to enable us to pack more into the time we have but apart from this, tracks from the latest Crosby CDs will be playing from 1 p.m. onwards alongside a PowerPoint presentation of Bing photos.

A three-course Carvery Dinner will be provided. Please book by sending a cheque for £24 per person (£20 for the meal, £4 for room-hire expenses) to Michael Crampton. Y'All Come! You will be amongst friends.

We've Got You Covered, Bing

Jon Oye finds more magazines on whose covers Bing appeared during his lifetime.

Unfortunately, there are no comprehensive reference books available, or archives to be found, containing a full listing of who appeared on what magazine covers over the years. The Internet provides the best source for documenting this type of information for current celebrities, but as far as delving back beyond a few decades ago, the virtual path all but vanishes. A Google image search turns up only about fourteen different Bing Crosby covers and, ironically, the new "Bing" search engine is even less efficient, retrieving but eleven.

About the only way to chronicle Bing's long ago and far away appearances on paper periodicals with any level of certainty is to physically find them, whether at flea markets, garage sales, antique shops, or posted in online auctions. As the years pass, these tangible records of Bing's popularity, ephemeral time capsules originally intended to last only as long as a couple of train trips or a few weeks in a dentist's office before being tossed into the incinerator, become more and more scarce.

There are some high profile publications that keep running counts of individuals who've most frequently graced their covers. Beyond his accolades earned on the basketball court, Michael Jordan also holds the record for *Sports Illustrated* covers with 51 appearances. The Beatles, predictably, take the *Rolling Stone* title with 30, according to its publisher Jann Wenner. *Time* provides a searchable web page where, by typing in a name, one can quickly find out not only how many times someone was on the cover, but also see thumbnail images of those covers. FDR made the front of *Time* on seven occasions during his life – surprisingly few, but nevertheless the same as his wartime British counterpart, Winston Churchill. Dwight Eisenhower appeared 21 times before his passing in 1969. Ronald Reagan was the cover boy a lofty 43 times before his death – but it's Richard Nixon's total of 54 that tops the list. Disappointingly, *Time* seems to be the only publication that furnishes this convenient search option. (For the record, Bing was *Time*'s cover subject only once . . . but that's still quite a feather in the fedora for a non-political figure. He was on rival *Newsweek*'s cover twice.)

While the initial list of magazines Bing appeared on during his lifetime ("Bing: an Up-Front Guy," issue #146) was understood from the outset to be an incomplete and open-ended one, it's still a little amazing that upwards of 100 additional covers (listed below) have turned up in just three short years; this despite their being discovered by the most casual and rudimentary of research methods (described above). The original list comprised 129 covers, the updated one 242 and counting.

Which would appear to be quite a phenomenal number, if not for the unnerving fact that an informal sweep of the Internet reveals dozens of websites showing huge numbers for contemporary celebrities. Among these are present-day heartthrobs Johnny Depp and Brad Pitt, who both handily outdistance our man with cover counts of 431 and 394, respectively, as of this writing. A fan site dedicated to U2 lists over 300 covers for the Irish rock band, as of December 2007. MJ-covers.com is a website which, believe it or not, seems to have been created for the sole purpose of chronicling (and selling) magazines with Michael Jackson's image on the cover. The current count is a staggering 904, though that includes the wave of periodicals whose editors rushed to feature the Gloved One immediately following his untimely death last year. Most jaw dropping of all is Madonna's unofficial total, each cover of which has been uploaded for viewing on yet another website: over 1,700!

Any Crosby person might understandably be dumbfounded as to how a performer of Bing's unprecedented media straddling dominance and cherished-citizen status – the likes of which few entertainers have even come within hailing distance of – could ultimately be upstaged in this or any other category by so many present-day personalities. After taking a closer look, though, it becomes evident that we must round up the usual caveats in order to get to the bottom of this apparent aberration.

According to the 1958 edition of the *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, the number of magazine titles in circulation in the U.S. shrank from roughly 4,800 to 4,400 between 1939 and 1947, and plummeted to less than 3,400 by 1954. It was during this period that Bing arrived at and maintained his greatest level of popularity. The 2003 *Statistical Abstract* reports over 13,000 titles by the year 2000, and the number had mushroomed to more than 17,000 by 2002, according to Magazine Publishers of America. This periodical population explosion was in part due to new production technology and positive demographic trends beginning in the early 1980s, plus a 1990s bent toward niche periodicals, which continues to this day – despite our supposed migration toward a paperless society.

World statistics are more difficult to track down, but the above U.S. model generally illustrates the enormous publishing disparity between Bing's era and our current one. However, the Second World War directly affected European and Asian nations on a much more profound level than the U.S., which, unlike its overseas allies and enemies, continued to publish entertainment-oriented periodicals virtually uninterrupted throughout the 1940s. While the numbers rolling off the presses were reduced, about the only thing to really suffer Stateside was the quality of the wartime paper that magazines were printed on. As a result, the worldwide ratio of 21st century to mid-20th century periodicals is likely even greater than that of the United

States.

In a nutshell, as the world's population has increased dramatically over the last 30 years, so has the number of magazines . . . there were far fewer covers available for Bing's face to grace than there are for Madonna's, Oprah's and Brangelina's. And we haven't even discussed disposable income, an unfathomable concept during the Great Depression and War Years, yet a relatively abundant reality in the Free World of the past few decades, one which has inevitably helped nourish the recent growth of the publishing industry.

One final note of interest: There is a website with the red flag-triggering name "Who's Dated Who?" which includes an extensive section on magazine covers of dozens of celebrities, some of whom made their marks prior to the current century. It's easily the most comprehensive chronicle of pre-Generation X personalities on the Internet. Frank Sinatra can be seen on 56 covers, dating back to 1944, and Elvis Presley on 115, starting in '56 – not counting four posthumous appearances by Frank and 59 by Elvis. Bette Davis shows up on 86 covers, Gary Cooper 89 (beginning as far back as 1929), Ava Gardner 195, Humphrey Bogart 20, Dean Martin 21, Doris Day 107. Not surprisingly, Marilyn Monroe trumps all with a whopping 585 in her 36 years, plus scores more after she died. Nevertheless, as with the Internet in general, "Who's Dated Who?" apparently falls far short of the mark in properly representing "old school" stars, judging by the pittance of Bing covers displayed there: a mere 29. Either that, or there's a decided lack of interest in Bing Crosby on the part of the website's owners.

The following list of recently surfaced Bing covers serves as an addendum to the first one, and the sum total continues to be a work in progress. Hopefully there are still many more aging Crosby-covered quarterlies, monthlies and weeklies out there that will turn up over the course of the next few years, before completely fading from sight and memory.

Key: Name of magazine (country of origin, if other than the U.S.) – issue date – description of cover illustration, if other than a solo photo of Bing. Sunday newspaper magazine supplements are indicated with (sup.).

400 Songs to Remember – September 1939
ABC Weekly, The (Australia) – August 28, 1943
Billboard – July 13, 1940
Chez Nous (France) – September 11, 1952 – with son Lindsay
Cine Romance (Portugal) – 1955 – with Grace Kelly in a still from The Country Girl
" " – Dec. 25, 1956 – Bing depicted in one of four insets, from Anything Goes
Ciné Review (France) – September 7, 1945
" " " – ? 1946 – with Barry Fitzgerald, a shot from Going My Way
" " " – ? 1954 – with Danny Kaye and Vera Ellen, a shot from "Noel Blanc" (White Christmas)
Cinelandia (Argentina) – November 1941
City of Destiny – Autumn 1939 – a local Tacoma, Washington publication
Colecção Cinema (Portugal) – August 27, 1959 – colorized still from Bells of St. Mary's with Ingrid Bergman
Colorama (Philadelphia Inquirer sup.) – March 21, 1954
Compact ...for Young People – November 1953 – inset, Bing & Bob (still from Road to Bali): "The Bing Crosby Bob Hope Feud ...is it for Real?"
Disc (UK) – Dec. 1963 – Beatles cover w/ inset of Bing in ad for "Do You Hear What I Hear?" 45 r.p.m. single
Down Beat – May 19, 1950 – hamming it up on trumpet with Jimmy McPartland
Everybody's (Australia) – January 24, 1962 – with son Harry
Family Circle, The – September 9, 1938 – inset with Ellen Drew and banjo
" " – September 29, 1939 – inset with Louise Campbell, a shot from The Star Maker
" " – September 20, 1940 – inset with Mary Martin, a still from *Rhythm on the River*
" " – April 18, 1941 – with Hope and Lamour, still from *Road to Zanzibar*
" " – November 6, 1942
" " – November 26, 1942
Film Feature (UK) – 1947
Film Pictorial (UK) – April 7, 1934 – with Judith Allen, in a pose from Too Much Harmony

" " – May 1935
" " – March 6, 1937
" " – October 9, 1937 – with Shirley Ross and Martha Raye, from Waikiki Wedding

Game & Gossip – January 15, 1965 – illustration of Bing superimposed on a golf ball
" " – February 7, 1966 – a graphic illustration of Bing golfing
" " – January 1977 – Bing leaning on golf cart at his annual Pro-Am tournament

Golf Digest – June 1953 – Bing & Bob

Golfer, The – April 1955 – with Frank Heffelfinger

Heroes All—Catholic Action Illustrated – October 4, 1946 – Roman Catholic schoolchildren's comic book, featuring the following cover story: "American Legend—The Story of Bing Crosby"

Inside – November 1955 – inset, with the caption, "Bing in 1930: Jail by Nite—Movies by Day"

Ladies Home Journal – April 1973 – inset, with Mary Frances

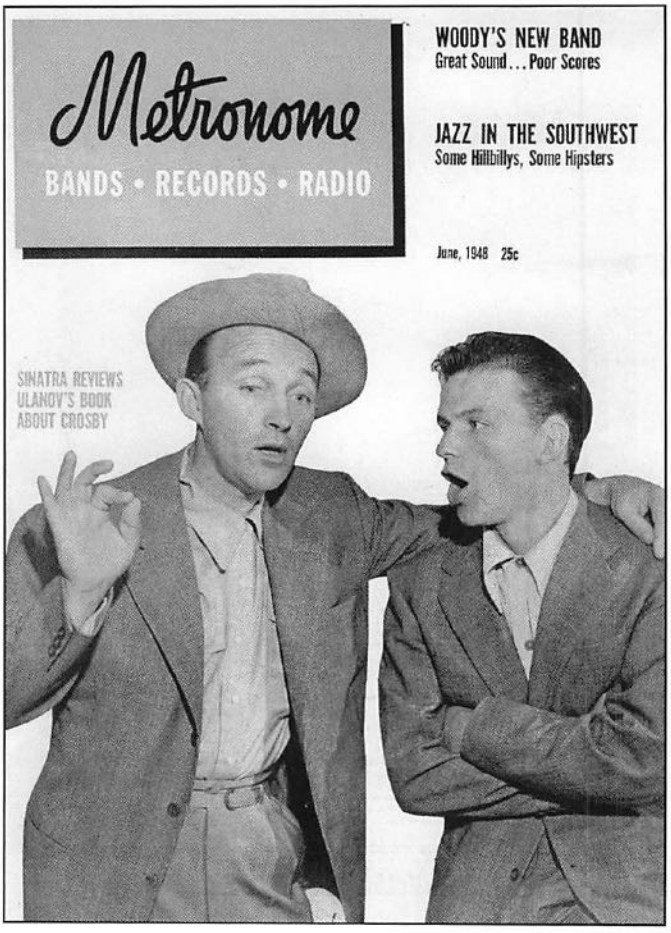
Latest Popular Radio Hit Songs – 1941 – with Carolyn Lee, from *Birth of the Blues*

Legato – November 1952 – "The Magazine of the Home Organist" inset photo from *Just For You*

Leoplan (Argentina) – (?), 1956 – with Frank Sinatra, a scene from *High Society*

Living (L.A. Examiner, pictorial sup.) – April 15, 1956 – at Hayden Lake, Idaho home

Love Novels – June 1934 – with Carole Lombard, a publicity still from We're Not Dressing



Melody – July 1935

Metronome – July 1948 – with Frank Sinatra
" – December 1950 – candid shot of Bing playing bongo drums!

Mon Film (France) – July 15,1953 – with Jane Wyman, *Just For You*

Movie Songs – July 1946

Movie Story – July 1947 – inset, with Barry Fitzgerald, from *Welcome, Stranger*

Movies – January 1935

National Song Review – dated "Late Summer" only; possibly 1941

News Review – May 18, 1940

Over 245 Well Known Songs – November 1949

Parade (sup.) – March 6, 1949

People (Australia) – August 13, 1952 – sans toupee

Photoplay – March 1947

Pictorial and TV Magazine (sup.) – May 13, 1962 – caricature, with Bob Hope and Edie Adams

Picture Show (UK) – June 2, 1934 – with Marion Davies, from Going Hollywood
" " – May 25, 1935 – with Kitty Carlisle, from Here Is My Heart
" " – December 7, 1935 – with Mary Boland, from Two for Tonight
" " – February 1, 1941 – with Mary Martin, from Rhythm on the River
" " – August 23, 1941 – with Bob and Dottie, from Road to Zanzibar
" " – August 29, 1942 – with Virginia Dale, from Holiday Inn
" " – December 19, 1942 – with Bob and Dottie, from Road to Morocco
" " – October 23, 1943 – with Marjorie Reynolds, from Dixie
" " – December 23/30, 1950 – with Nancy Olsen, from Mr. Music
" " – October 4, 1952 – with Jane Wyman, from Just For You
" " – December 25, 1954 – with Kaye, Clooney, and Ellen, White Christmas
" " – December 22, 1956 – with Sinatra, Kelly, and Holm, from *High Society*

Picturegoer (UK) – October 28, 1944
" " – January 17, 1948
" " – April 1, 1950
" " – November 29, 1952 – with Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour, from Road to Bali

Popular Song Hits – July 1935 – with Ethel Merman

Popular Songs – November 1949

Popular Songster, The – Spring 1935 (?)

Radio Life – January 2, 1944 – Bing and Sinatra

Radio Stars Album – 1932

Record Guide (Australia) – November 1955

San Francisco – December 1974 – illustration of Bing and family, "The Road to Hillsborough"

Showmanship (UK) – April 1949 – promoting A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court

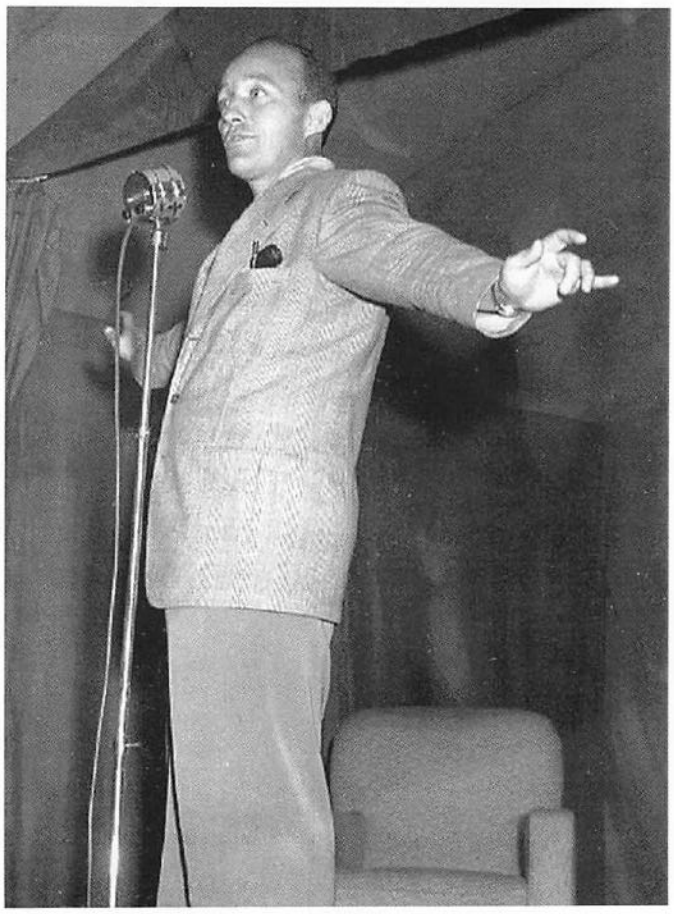
Sintonia (Argentina) – October 1934 – playing an accordion, from We're Not Dressing
Song Hits – July 1939
" " – April 1940
" " – February 1945 – with Betty Hutton, publicity shot from *Here Come the Waves*
" " – June 1945
" " – March 1946 – with Dorothy Lamour, from *Road to Utopia*
" " – June 1947
Song Hits Magazine Presents Christmas Songs – Winter 1970 – several inset photos of singers (Perry Como, Nat Cole, et al.), including a shot of Bing singing "live" on television
Song Master – November 1941
Song Parade – May 1941 – individual photos of current stars, including Glenn Miller and Bing
Songs That Live Forever – Spring 1963 – Inset photo of Bing from *Road to Bali*
Sporting Weekly (Australia) – July 1943 – "Complete Life Story of Bing the Groaner"
Southern Golfer, The – 1958 – posed photo of Bing teaching Kathryn golf swing
Star Week (Toronto Star sup.) – April 11-18, 1970 – with Bernadette Peters in *Cooling It*
Sun Spots (Local publication, Palm Desert, CA) – March 1958 – candid shot with Kathryn, entering Shadow Mountain Club… caption reads, "The Mayor and First Lady"
Tele Scope (sup.) – September 28, 1959 – line drawing montage of Bing on set w/ TV camera, crew, etc.
Television (Canada)(sup.) – 1962
Tempo (Australia) – November 1940 – four photos from *Road to Singapore*
" " – November 1944
" " – September 1950
Tuney Tunes (Netherlands) – June 1951 – candid shot, with son Gary
TV Digest (sup.) – Nov. 28–Dec. 4, 1964 – with TV sitcom "family" plus Frank McHugh
TV Graphic (sup.) – October 2, 1960 – caricature portrait of Bing
" " – August 4, 1963 – Bing on the golf course, holding banner that reads: "Beat Bing"
TV Times (sup.) – September 13-19, 1964 – inset with Beverly Garland from *Bing Crosby Show*
" " – December 18, 1976 – with Kathryn
TV Week (sup.) – November 1-7, 1964
" " – May 5, 1968 – shot from a TV Special, with Peter Gennaro
" " – December 14-20, 1969 – shot from a TV Special, with Juliet Prowse
TV Weekly – November 3-9, 1963 – caricature of Bing as a magician
TV-Radio Life – March 10-16, 1956
Weekly Film News (UK) – September 10, 1949
" " " – March 4, 1950
Weekend (UK) – Feb. 7-13, 1968 – Candid close-up of Bing, with Kathryn in background
Wrestling USA – August 1954 – with wrestler Gorgeous George

Jon Oye

The Freckleton Accident

The Sun News of Ohio carried a moving story involving Bing in its issue of November 12 last year. Rita Revay, then known as Lt. Rita Ryan, arrived in England in November 1943 expecting to care for sick and wounded GIs. In the months that followed, the Army nurse treated injured soldiers at the 8th Convalescent Hospital. At Base Air Depot #2 in Warton, she tended maintenance crews suffering from fractures and burns. She even nursed many of them through the mumps. But Revay's most memorable patients turned out to be two English preschoolers.

The Cleveland Heights resident said her work changed dramatically on Aug. 23, 1944, when lightning struck an American bomber during a thunderstorm so fierce it uprooted trees. The B-24 crashed in nearby Freckleton, demolishing the Sad Sack Café, a popular hangout for Americans and Royal Air Force personnel, and then skidded into a nursery school. Fuel spewed from the plane's gas tanks, burst into flame and set fire to everything it touched. In the end, 61 people perished in the accident, including 47 English civilians. Of these, 38 were children.



Bing entertains US servicemen.

When Revay reported for duty that summer evening, she learned she would be taking care of two of the three surviving preschoolers. Earlier in the war, Revay had seen two single engine aircraft collide in mid-air; she'd witnessed sudden death. Still, the nurse's first glimpse of her little charges unnerved her.

"They were so bandaged up," Revay remembered. "The little boy — Georgie — only his mouth was visible because he had so many bandages."

Although Revay helped with five-year-old Ruby Whittle, George Carey, age 5, became her primary responsibility. Because he could not use his hands, Revay held Georgie's cup for each sip of water and fed him every bite he ate. Georgie's worst moments occurred when doctors changed his dressings.

"They used to give him morphine because it was so painful," Revay said. **Bing Crosby** entertained at Base Air Depot 2, but Revay missed his performance.

"I didn't go to see him," she said. "I was busy with the kids."

The crooner made a surprise visit to the youngsters afterwards.

"But when he first saw the children, he just teared up. He couldn't sing," Revay recalled. Crosby fled into the hallway to regain his composure, and then sang for the little patients. The singer was just one of many people who extended kindness to the preschoolers. The American soldier who had pulled Ruby from the rubble often sat at the little girl's bedside.

Revay said the English had developed specialized centers to treat burn victims of German bombing. Over several weeks, the children's condition improved until they were stable enough to travel to one of these.

Revay completed her tour of duty in Warton and returned to New York City after her discharge. An Army friend eventually persuaded her to come to Cleveland, where she met John Revay on a blind date. The couple was married 44 years. John died in 1992.

This engraved stone has the names of the teachers and children killed in the Freckleton accident. It holds a place of honor in the children's garden of the Mighty Eighth Museum. Former staff of Base Air Depot 2 never forgot the young survivors of the Freckleton disaster. They contributed funds for travel expenses and brought the now grown "kids" to meetings in the States. Revay, however, was busy working and raising two sons. She did not attend veterans' reunions for many years.

Then, four decades after the war, Revay reconnected with George Carey and Ruby Whittle at a joyful reunion in Indiana. Afterwards, Revay drove Carey to Delaware so he could visit another veteran.

En route, they swapped memories and laughed about "Georgie's" unenthusiastic response to Bing Crosby. Carey also remembered his futile attempts to boss Revay. When he would demand, "Nurse, gimme a plum!" she'd insist he ask politely.

Today, victims of the Freckleton catastrophe share a common grave in the village churchyard. (The American military paid for their mass burial.) Even before Revay left Warton in December 1945, men from Base Air Depot 2 had built a memorial garden and playground on village-owned property near the Freckleton nursery school. They donated money for the equipment and a stone tablet commemorating the tragedy. The villagers continue to hold a memorial service on each anniversary.

On this side of the Atlantic, veterans established a children's garden within the memorial park of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Pooler, Ga. A marble slab lists the names of all the children who died in the accident.

The event remains seared in 92-year-old Revay's memory, too. "It was dreadful! It was something you just couldn't fathom," she said. "But it was wartime."

Jerri Donohue

Stop press - Victory in HLC vs UMG!

After an arduous 10 year battle, the heirs of Bing Crosby finally got their day in court. On June 30, a jury in Santa Monica, CA awarded them in excess of $2 million in their lawsuit against Universal Music Group. It's a significant victory for the Crosby family, as well as for all recording artists whose royalties have been underpaid by record labels.

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